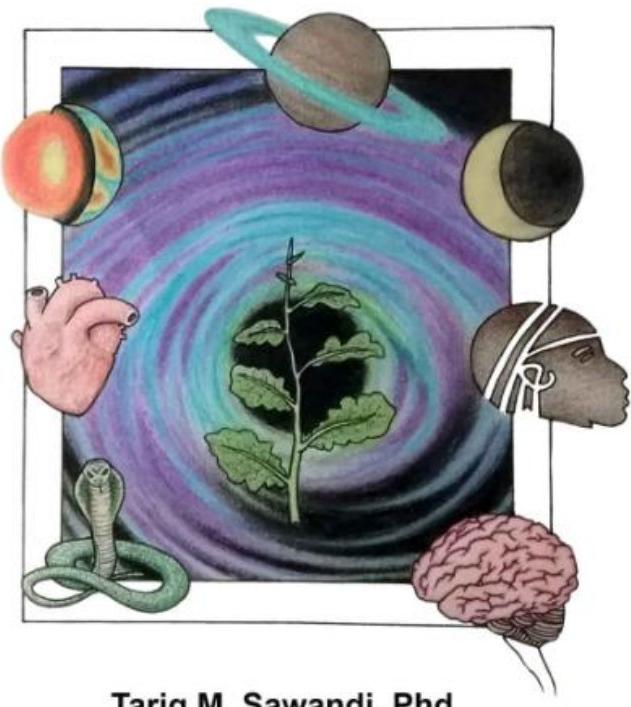


AFRICAN MEDICINE: A GUIDE TO YORUBA DIVINATION AND HERBAL MEDICINE

## **AFRICAN MEDICINE**

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO YORUBA HEALING SCIENCE  
AND AFRICAN HERBAL REMEDIES

All-New 2nd Edition



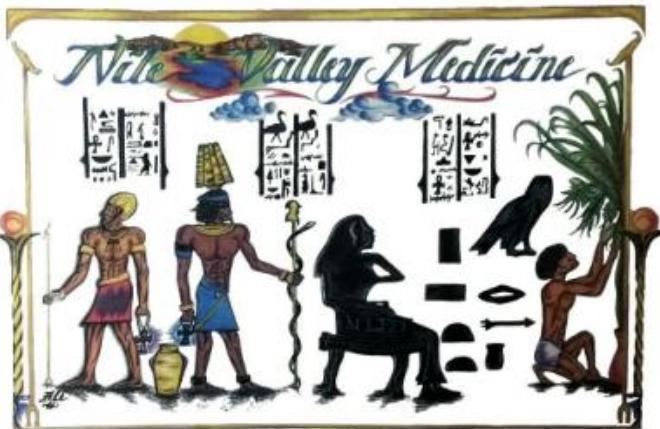
Tariq M. Sawandi, PhD

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A Complete Guide To  
Yoruba Healing Science  
and African Herbal  
Remedies

**Tariq M. Sawandi,  
M.H., PhD**

AFRICAN MEDICINE: A GUIDE TO YORUBA DIVINATION AND HERBAL MEDICINE



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African Medicine: A Guide To Yoruba Healing Science and African Herbal Remedies

Second Edition, First Printing

Published by [www.NileValleyMedicine.com](http://www.NileValleyMedicine.com)

Cover Design - T.M. Sawandi

Printed in the USA

ISBN Number: 10-1548073989

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## **DEDICATION AND PRAYER**

To the Great Creator and Sustainer of the Universe; and to the ancestors, for their wisdom. O God! You are the Lord of people, remove the suffering, and give healing because You are the healer. There is no remedy except from You; Let the healing stay till the sickness is over. Amin

## **SECOND EDITION OF AFRICAN MEDICINE**

S

Ince the first edition of African Medicine was published over three years ago, I have received many letters and e-mails from people around the world from all cultural backgrounds. I write this second edition in response to those who have shared their stories, insights, and wisdom, and in hopes of offering a little help to those who would like to be a part of this renewal of African healing wisdom. The fact is African holistic health science is making a comeback as more people of African descent develop an interest in their history and to the indigenous herbal traditions and customs of Mother Africa.

People of all racial backgrounds are becoming disillusioned with conventional Western medicine with all its "iatrogenic" diseases, or diseases caused by medically prescribed drugs and therapies. An increasing number of enlightened Africans in the diaspora

are getting in touch with herbs and traditional African diets and, at the same time, with their own African heritage. So, now we are once again experiencing a "holistic health movement". At the outset, my main goal with the first edition of African Medicine was to interpret and present African healing science in its true light. It is my belief that the credo of African Medicine is a much needed complement to what is happening today in the renaissance of traditional medicines such as Chinese, Ayurvedic, and Native American traditions.

African medicine seeks to reunite the personality-complex with the Divine, or Higher Self in a more meaningful, holistic way. Traditional African healing science helps to strengthen the energetic connections between the person and the soul itself, by rebalancing the mind, body, and spirit complexes as a whole. It is this personality complex which Yoruba priests refer to as Orishas. The Yoruba healer/priest seeks to help achieve alignment of the Orisha modes within his or her patients. These ideas are expressed in sacred oral traditions handed down for thousands of years from generation to generation through discussion both among elders and between generations.

During times of slavery many Africans Transported to the New World maintained the spiritual view of health that had characterized their African ancestors. They believed that good health arose from harmony with nature and the Creator, poor health, from discord. When disease occurs, it is a sign that we are blocking the natural flow of consciousness and subtle life-force energies through our body/mind/spirit/ complexes. It is a sign from our Orishas that something has gone wrong in the system. The Orisha network needs to be rebalanced if health and purification is to be achieved. Diseases could stem from deviance from religious morals and ethics, or conflict with the natural environment, and the eating of wrong foods. Many of the basic physical/spiritual health issues that human beings are trying to work through can be corrected in the Orisha Internals.

Traditional healing in the Caribbean slave culture regarded "root doctors", or "herbalists" with high esteem and valued herbal cures, such as mullein leaves, camphor, and sarsaparilla roots. Most of these herbs as well as medicinal formulas combined elements of both science and faith. Traditional African medicine was, and is, effective in healing disease. Right diet,

healthy lifestyle, and spirituality are essential ingredients for recovery, whether in modern medicine or traditional healing. Root doctors provided the authority in our community in which such principles were grounded and preserved. This deep legacy continues to affect us.

Modern medicine is young, the jungle is old. The jungle ways were once our ways, and they are not easily forgotten. Within each of us lingers something of the older African wisdom. Somewhere in each of us the ancestors are calling, calling us back to the dance, the drum, and the jungle. Herbal medicine is part of our African heritage, part of the blood and spirit of our past.

## INTRODUCTION

H

erbal medicine is an African tradition. For thousands of years, many people of the African continent had a faithful and confident dependence on the use of various plants of the earth for the alleviation and avoidance of certain chronic and acute illnesses. Like healers in many cultures of the world, African herbalists have drawn on a large body of knowledge in the course of over 10,000 years, and yet the world has ignored and overlooked the African contribution to medicine and the healing arts. It is my hope that this small book will help to change that.

Traditionally, in ancient African societies African healers would orally transmit their herbal wisdom from one generation to the next. Not only was African medicine passed from generation to generation, starting in ancient Egypt (Khemit), but from continent to

continent.

For example, when Greek physicians took their oath to the healing god Aesculapius, they were really swearing in to an African originally named Imhotep, the great physician from Egypt. During his lifetime, he was revered as the "god of medicine" between 2780 to 2680 B.C. Western historians have wrongly given credit to a Greek doctor named Hippocrates, who had actually taken the Aesculapius (Imhotepian) oath and lived 2,000 years after the true father/god of medicine.

The Dravidians (the Black Untouchables) of ancient India who were the first inhabitants of that country, migrated from Ethiopia via the Isthmus of Suez. They were the founders of Hinduism and Ayurveda medicine, which was a product of the esoteric philosophy of inner Africa.

One of the oldest and most fascinating systems of medicine on the planet was developed by the Yoruba people of Western Nigeria, with scattered groups in Benin and Togo Africa. The Yoruba trace their origins to the ancient holy city of Ile-Ifa around some 3000 to 4000 years ago. The holy city of Ile-Ife, the spiritual epicenter of the Yoruba people is

the home of one of the most magnificent traditions of herbal healing science. During the 19th century, many Yoruba were captured and brought as slaves to the New World, Brazil, Bahia, Cuba, and the Caribbean, where the Yoruba language is still spoken and Yoruba religious medicine is still practiced.

The Africans who were brought to the New World were already socialized in their own African traditions and healing systems. They brought with them sophisticated beliefs about illness and its healing, and adapted these to the new and often brutal circumstances of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In the new lands to which they were brought against their will, unknown diseases killed thousands, and malnutrition claimed the lives of many women and children.

African people arriving in the Caribbean and Brazil encountered infectious diseases such as leprosy, yellow fever, smallpox and measles. Some of these diseases were familiar; West Africans had developed partial immunity to some, such as malaria. Others were new and deadly, including diseases native to the New World as well as those introduced by Europeans. The conditions of slavery exacerbated the effects of infectious disease,

producing high rates of illness. So, in order to combat these illnesses, African slaves who were trained in traditional African medicine resorted to healing rituals and the use of curative plants found on the Islands. African herbalists, or bush doctors were so popular in the history of Venezuela that slave healers were often able to purchase their freedom with the proceeds of their medical practices.

Yoruba medicine in North America has not been widely studied, but recent interest in traditional African medicine has stimulated new research into the subject. A recent study of the herbal practices among the Gullah people in North Carolina, for instance, found that the Gullah are descendants of African slaves who practiced Yoruba medicine.

According to oral tradition, Yoruba medicine was founded over 2,000 years ago by a mystic Prophet named Orunmila, who appeared among the Yoruba in the ancient holy city of Ile Ife. He brought with him a divine system of ethics, morals, religious beliefs, divination, and herbal medicine. The holy city Ile Ife became the preeminent Yoruba spiritual and cultural center. It was here, in Ile Ife, that Orunmila built his temple on the sacred hill called Oke Tape,

meaning "Only Heaven knows the way to salvation." Orunmila's teachings were rooted in a religious text called the "Ifa Corpus", or the book of "Cosmic Intelligence". This ancient text is the foundation for Yoruba healing science.

The Yoruba believe in one Supreme Being, known as Oludumare, "The Principle of Principles". It is said that Oludumare has numerous intermediary spiritual beings, known as Orishas, which were in broad terms similar to the angels of the Bible, the Quran, and Torah.

Communication with the Orishas is established through various forms of divination performed by a priest, or priestess, and through spirit possession which takes place during drum and dance ceremonies.

In the Yoruba healing system, divination is used in the early stages of diagnosis and treatment to determine an individual's personal Orisha and thereafter to determine the will of the Orisha for that person. According to Yoruba healers, divination is the process through which the Orishas diagnose people's health problems and recommend solutions. The Orishas are pure energy of light governed by God. Each Orisha has its own drum rhythm, song, foods, herbs, attributes, bodily features, and dance step.

Yoruba divination presented a comprehensive theory and practice for balancing the mind, body, and spirit.

The Yoruba religion integrated the teachings of Islam by the 12th century A.D. by way of Muslim scholars sent to Western Nigeria to introduce the teachings of Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Quran to the Yoruba there. All of the studies or sketches of West African history reveal that the Yoruba people claim a common ancestry and history with many of the Prophets mentioned in the Bible, Torah, and Holy Quran. While today, many Yoruba devotees practice the Yoruba rituals passed down by Prophet Orunmila, both Christian and Islamic teachings have become an integral feature of the Yoruba religion. This is illustrative of the Yoruba peoples quest for reality, the search for truth, or the restless striving of the human soul for the perfection of its spiritual, mystical, or philosophical needs. The Yoruba religion is gleaned from the past and present, from east and west, and all of the teachings of spiritual tradition.

The simplicity and power of this ancient religious medicine becomes evident as we progress through it. Yoruba medicine consists of

a matrix of spiritual history, as well as spiritual insights and mystical inspirations unique to Afro-centric thought. From these evolved the truths of the inner and outer comprehension of Cosmic Laws. It includes a cast of herbal philosophy, for it sought to embrace the welfare and health of the living souls.

## The History of Egyptian/African Medicine

T

here was a tendency of Egyptian physicians and priests to associate magic with medicine. From such origins, there rose in Egypt great physicians, surgeons and specialists, who acknowledged an ethical code that passed down into the famous Hippocratic Oath. The Greeks derived much of their medical knowledge from Egyptian physicians around 750 B.C. The influence of Egyptian medicine was so great on European culture that even to this day Egyptian concepts still have its signature in modern Western medicine. For example, when a medical doctor writes a prescription he uses the Egyptian symbol for health (Jupiter) with the symbol for retrograde = Rx. This means, "I curse your health in retrograde death".

During the reign of King Menes, there developed a body of knowledge that centered on

magic, medicine, philosophy and religion which is known as the Memphite Theology. Egyptian priest physicians saw the ideal of medicine as a magical principle: "that the qualities of animals or things are distributed throughout all their parts." Consequently, within the universe contact is established between objects through emanations (radiation), the result being sensation or cognition, healing or contagion. (See diagram 1: Egyptian Magical Principle.) witches, and sorcerers have often been accused of being followers of the devil. Westerners have been apt to see the Egyptian's practice of magic as mere superstitions of the ignorant. However, there were various types of magical practices among the ancient Egyptians, some of them which have in fact played a significant role in modern medicine (an account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians, London, 1836). The Egyptians distinguished two kinds of magical practices. The first, called "spiritual magic", depended on the mysterious supernatural powers such as psychic phenomenon, ESP, telepathy, levitation, and the like. This class of magic was subdivided into "divine magic" and "low", or satanic magic.

The second was called "natural magic", in which natural materials like perfumes, incense,

oils, crystals, and herbs were used rather than supernatural forces. Astrology, alchemy (chemistry), and trance were also widely used by Egyptian priests to heal disease. These "sciences" were generally regarded as being different from magic.

The ancient Egyptian's study of these subjects tended to overlap, so as to develop a set of unifying principles. According to the ancient priests, the creative process of performing magic was considered "the art of changing Consciousness at will". So, at its root, magic is about "expanded consciousness", because consciousness change is important, because it's the root of all kinds of change, but it is only effective in the healing arts when it also brings about changes in the outer world as well as the inner world.

The four magical principles that the priests worked with are the four modes of the life force (hot/dry=fire, cold/wet=water,

Cold/dry=earth, hot/wet=air). If he observes the laws of the Cycles, he is able to keep the four modes of his life force in balance. Therefore, we can be successful at "magic healing" through the realization of what we "will", primarily through the agency of our life-

force. This is the simple rule of living in harmony with the daily cycles of your body. In order to achieve this equilibrium in our life force, we must get at least 8 hours of sleep a day, avoid sleeping during the day, exercising after sunset, avoid eating the wrong foods, and excessive sexual activity. We must live in moderation.

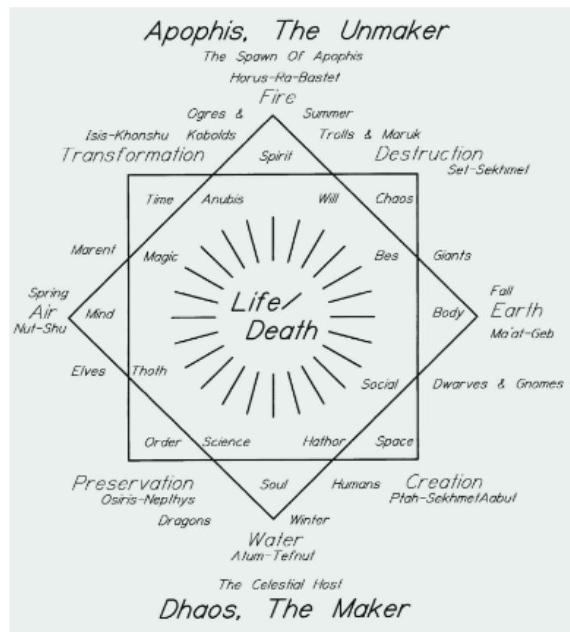
There is no doubt the Memphite Theology played a major role in evolving Egyptian medical theory. To them, magic and healing was "applied religion". The Memphite Theology is an inscription on a stone, now kept in the British Museum. It contains theo-logical, cosmological, and philosophical views of the Egyptians. It is dated 700 B.C. and bears the name of an Egyptian Pharaoh who stated that he had copied an inscription of his ancestors.

According to the Memphite Doctrine, "The Primate God Ptah, conceived in his heart, everything that exists and by his utterance created them all. He first emerged from the primeval waters of Nun in the form of a primeval Hill. Closely following the Hill, the God (Atum) also emerged from the waters and set upon Ptah, out of the primeval chaos contained 10 principles: 4 pairs of opposite

principles, together with two other gods: Ptah, Mind, Thought, and Creative utterance, When Alum joins himself to Ptah, he acts as Demiurge and executes the work of creation,

- a) Water is the source of all things.
- b) Creation was accomplished by the unity of two creative principles: Ptah and Atum, the unity of mind (Nous) with Logos (Creative utterance).
- c) Atum was Sun-God or fire-God,
- d) Opposite Principles control the life of the universe.
- e) The elements in creation were fire (Atum), water (Nun), Earth (Ptah) and Air.

### ***DIAGRAM 1. The Egyptian Magical Principle***



The gods whom Atum projected from his body were:

1. Shu (Air)
2. Tefnut (moisture)
3. Geb (earth)
4. Nut (sky) Who are said to have given birth to four other Gods:
5. Osiris

6. Isis
7. Seth (opposite of good)
8. Nephthys (unseen world)

The Egyptian concept of cosmology, like the Chinese doctrine of Yin and Yang, and the East Indian system of Tridosha (Pitta, Vata, and Kapha), offered a comprehensive explanation of the natural forces of the universe. There were other ideals which the Egyptians developed such as the Doctrine of the Soul. They believed that the soul and body were not two distinct things, but one in two different aspects, just as form is related to matter. The soul is the power that a living body possesses, and it is the end for which the body exists, the final cause of its existence.

By the time the Third Dynasty arrived during the reign of King Zoser, Imhotep, the great African physician had expanded on much of the earlier theories of medicine. Imhotep is regarded as the "real Father of Medicine". He diagnosed and treated more than two hundred diseases. Imhotep and his students knew how to detect diseases by the shape, color, or position of the visual parts of the body; they also practiced surgery, and extraction of medicine

from plants. Imhotep also knew of the circulation of the blood, four thousand years before it was known in Europe. His sayings and proverbs, which embodied his philosophy of life, were handed down from generation to generation. He is best known for his saying, "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we shall die."

Imhotep also promoted health by public sanitation, by circumcision of males, and by teaching the people the frequent use of the enema. Diodorus Siculus, the historian tells us:

"In order to prevent sicknesses they look after the health of their body by means of drenches, fasting and emetics, sometimes every day, and sometimes at intervals of three or four days. For they say that the larger part of the *food* taken into the body is superfluous, and that it is from this superfluous part that diseases are engendered."

The habit of taking enemas was learned by the Egyptians from observing the "ibis", a bird

that counteracts the constipating character of its food by using its long bill as a rectal syringe. Herodotus, the Jewish historian reports that the Egyptians, "purge themselves *every* month, three days successively, seeking to preserve health by emetics and *enemas*; for they suppose that all diseases to which men are subject, proceed from the food they use."

We can see that the Egyptians recognized the connection between (food) and the cause of certain pathological diseases. In Afrocentric science, all life (i.e. elements) is created by harmony and recreates harmony. A disease is viewed as harmonizing healing crisis of the body. When a person gets overloaded with waste, toxins from constipating junk foods, drugs, alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, sodas, fried foods, bleach white flour, enriched flour, white rice, dairy products, cooked pig and blood in meat, salt, white sugar, incorrect food combinations (i.e. protein and carbohydrates = meat and bread or potatoes) the body reacts with a healing crisis (cleansing reaction). This cleansing is called a disease by Western medicine. Actually, the disease is the "food itself". Western medicine tries to cure the body from curing (cleansing) itself with a cure (drugs) and/or surgical mutilations. Oddly enough,

Western doctors blame the cleansing reaction.  
(African Holistic Health by Llaila Afrika.)

The concept of universal harmony is characteristic to African thought. Africans believe there is a harmony in the universe - the circling of the planets, the tides of the earth, the growth of vegetation, the lives of animals and people, all are related. All that is in the universe emanates from the same source, one universal Mind.

The ancient Egyptian priests looked out at the universe, and noted the ratios of the different planetary cycles, and counted the rhythmic periods in nature. They also calculated the ratios of the human body. They put together a "sacred" geometry, which were a set of mathematical ratios and proportions. They believed that these ratios if used in the sound of music and the architecture of buildings (pyramids), this would resonate with the life forces of the universe and thus enhance life.

The ancient physicians/priests of the Nile Valley were instructed in temples that were called "Per Ankh". In today's language they would be called the "House of Life". Of the thousands of medical papyri originally written, less than a dozen have been discovered, and of

that number, the Ebers Papyrus and the Edwin Smith Papyrus are deemed the most profound.

James Henry Breasted, who had spent ten years translating the document, published the Edwin Smith Papyrus in 1930. This papyrus describes 48 different injuries to the head, face, neck, thorax and spinal column and the appropriate surgical methods for attending to them. It is suspected that the Eighteenth Dynasty scribe who was responsible for copying the original text only wrote the first 48 cases dealing with the upper third of the body. There are more than 90 anatomical terms referenced in the Edwin Smith Papyrus, and there are more than 200 terms listed in various Nile Valley medical literature. This papyrus is also of great importance because of its use of the word "brain" and references to the neurological relationship between the brain (spinal cord and nervous system) and the body.

The Ebers Papyrus (ca. 1500 B.C.) explores a broad range of medical science and includes chapters on the pulse and cardio-vascular system, dermatology, gynecology, ophthalmology, obstetrics, tumors, burns, fractures, intestinal disorders and much more. There is also considerable evidence that

physicians in Egypt (also Kemet) practiced circumcision, brain surgery and were extremely well versed in gynecology and obstetrics.

By 2000 B.C., physicians in Egypt had already created an effective organic chemical contraceptive. This formula consisted of acacia spikes, honey and dates, which were mixed in a specific ratio, and inserted into the vagina. Modern science has since discovered that acacia spikes contain lactic acid, which is a natural chemical spermicide.

Egyptian herbalists soaked bags of wheat and barley in a sample of a woman's urine to conduct a pregnancy and fetal sex test. Urine from a pregnant woman was known to accelerate the growth of certain plants; if the barley sprouted, it meant that the woman was pregnant and was going to give birth to a female child. If the wheat sprouted, it meant that she would give birth to a male child. The urine pregnancy test was not discovered by modern science until 1926 and the wheat/barley sex determination test was not developed until 1933.

In 1987, the National Academy of Sciences published a report by the National Academy of Engineers entitled "Lasers: Invention to

Application". In a chapter titled "Lasers in Medicine", the author, Rodney Perkins, M.D., suggests that a form of laser therapy was actually used in Egypt. Dr. Perkins states that:

"The use of the laser in medicine and surgery has a relatively short pedigree of less than two decades. Although the range of laser radiation extends both below and above the visible portion of the electromagnetic spectrum, that radiation is, in a sense, only a special form of light. The use of other forms of light in medicine has a longer history. There is documentation that the ancient Egyptians recognized and used the therapeutic power of light as long as 6,000 years ago. Patches of depigmented skin, now referred to as vitiligo, were cosmetically undesirable. Egyptian healers reported crushed a plant similar to present day parsley and rubbed the affected areas with the crushed leaves. Exposure to the sun's radiation produced a severe form of sunburn only in the treated areas. The erythema subsided, leaving

hyperpigmentation in the previously depigmented areas."<sup>5</sup>

## Yoruba Medicine and Religious Philosophy

W

hen looking at Nile Valley Egypt and its contributions to natural and herbal medicine, it must be understood that we are not just talking about Egypt alone. We must consider the whole continent, which extends over 4,000 miles into the geography of Africa. Many tribes and African nations contributed their share of herbal and medical wisdom. This would include the Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mali, Libya, and dozens of other African nations. The Nile Valley, however, became something of a cultural highway, which made it a great historical stopping place for wisdom and knowledge.

Out of Africa came the world's first organized system of herbal and medical science. This knowledge was so profound, much of it passed from the Egyptians to the Phoenicians, the Yorubas, India, Syria, Babylon, the

Middle East, the Greeks, to the Romans, and from the romans to Western Europe. The three major herbal systems, Ayurveda, Chinese Traditional Medicine, and Western herbology were extracted from the knowledge created by the priest and wise men in the Nile Valley. When this gigantic work is completed, I believe the evidence will reveal Information that will amaze humanity.

Early In its history and its development, Nile Valley civilization created a basic way of life that attracted teachers, and priests from other parts of Africa, always enriching the original composition of the Nile Valley. By the time Yoruba people made their Journey In the Nile Valley, led by the mystic prophet Orunmila, Egyptian priests had accumulated centuries of herbal and medical knowledge. The Yoruba's drew from this treasure chest of wisdom, and incorporated it into their religious and cultural customs. The key point, in respect to the evolutionists of Yoruba medicine, is that Egyptian knowledge, coupled with the earlier Nok people, produced the outcome of Yoruba herbal practices.

From a conceptual standpoint, Osain herbalism is a religion, a philosophy, and a

science. Born from this concept is the idea that oneness with the Creative Essence brings about a wholeness in the human essence. Seekers, or aspirants of the system of Osain, or Yoruba, seek to bring themselves into alignment (balanced health) with his spiritual being (immortal reality), and his relationship with the Divine Cause. This is achieved through herbs, spiritual baths, right living, diet rituals, and self-development, which are meant to maintain a healthy and happy life. Thus, Osain is n divine journey to the inner self, which encompasses all aspects of life.

As envisioned by the ancient prophet, Orunmila of Yoruba, the Ifa Corpus (Cosmic Intelligence) is the text of Osain herbalism, Orunmila saw that dual levels of potentiality existed in the human body. Through him, we understand that the study of animate and inanimate, manifest and unmanifest, visible and invisible worlds lead to fundamental understandings of the processes of growth and life cycles of trees and plants, the lives of insects, animals and human nature. Through the guidance of Orunmila, the principles of Yoruba Cosmology evolved:

"The Self-Existent Being (Oludumare), or the One Source, is believed to be responsible for creation and maintenance of heaven and earth, of man and women, and brought into being divinities and spirits (Orisha) who are believed to be his functionaries as intermediaries between mankind and the Self-Existent Being (Oludumare) 6."

It was through the Ashe (Nature) that matter and the forces of creation evolved. Oludumare created this for a divine purpose. The union of the Orisha (angelic forces) and Aba (human development) gave birth to the dual potentiality of the human spirit. It is the goal of man to align his earthly consciousness with Ori (the physical and spiritual head) in order to connect with his divine spirit. (See diagram 2).

The seven major Orishas, which are the angelic forces of Yoruba context: Elegba, Obatala, Oshun, Ogun, Yemoja, Shango, Oya, and others too numerous to mention. There are also many minor Orishas associated with the human body. If one looks at all of the major and minor Orishas, then there may be slightly more

than 400 Orishas in the human body according to the esoteric literature. In the herbal context, each require special herbs and foods to bring out the life force energy that bring about their qualities. This "bringing about" is a dual endeavor, as the herbalist needs to follow certain guidelines and practices to efficaciously heal, or correct the Orisha imbalances.

When applying the spiritual principles of Yoruba medicine, we are dealing with what the priests call, "divination". This is indeed a mysterious system in Yoruba healing, where for centuries it has been considered the highest form of religion. What exactly is Yoruba divination? In the language of the Ifa, **divination is to invite the "incarnate" to come to form, or to show itself to us through spirit, or energy.** Thousands of years ago, the Yoruba healers said that we are multi-dimensional beings of energy and spirit, whose physical body is part of a larger dynamic system of energy. In other words, there is an entire Cosmos within the human body. It has its energies, its frequency of vibrations, and its Orisha-network system. These Orishas are the invisible intelligences governing the human body and its functions. In fact, **consciousness itself is a form of energy.** It is considered the

highest form of energy in the Universe, and is integrally connected to the Divine Consciousness. The Supreme Ruler and God of this great Universe is the consciousness in man which says "I am the Divine".

We are linked to the cosmos through our spirit body, and react to changes in the planets as well as to the moods and illnesses of others, to thought, emotion, sound, light, color, magnetic fields, the seasons, cycles of the moon, tides, thunderstorms, strong winds and even the spirits of the ancestors. When there is a change in the universe and environment, a resonance is produced in the spirit of the human body which in turn affects the physical body. It is through our spiritual bodies that we "invite" contact with the divine.

Put another way, the art of Yoruba divination is a means of communicating with the divine part of your spirit. The prophet Orunmila taught that the spiritual consciousness of man was not fixed in any point of the body but was in whatever part of man his thoughts dwelt. This is called the "mental" world. The orishas represent the organizing structures of consciousness which utilize the physical body as a vehicle of expression within

the physical space-time universe. Each one of us is an extension of a higher spiritual consciousness which seeks to evolve through learning experiences on earth. The drive of the Orishas to evolve toward a higher level of consciousness is the motivating force behind the divinational system. Thus the orisha spirits use the physical form as a teaching and learning tool. If we consider consciousness as a fundamental expression of life energy, we come closer to understanding how the orishas interact with and manifests through the many forms of physical matter.

The greatest task of healing ourselves using the Yoruba system of medicine, lies in restoring faith in our body's ability to heal itself. The ancient Yoruba healers referred to the healing benefit of plants not only for the cure of physical disease, but also for its inducement of extraordinary powers of consciousness and spiritual upliftment. They considered the essential nature of the plant connected with its form, and the forces and processes which gave rise to its energy. They also look at the way in which the plant reacted to its environment.

Through this study of nature, and the use of spiritual trance, it was possible to describe the

"attributes" of the plant orishas. This knowledge threw light on the essential nature of the plant spirit and on how its formative processes worked, i.e. its gestalt in space and time.

The herbal concoctions from the plant is prepared in such a way as to enhance these attributes of "formative forces". When introduced into the human being, it could be expected to work on and effect the patient on the "psycho-spiritual" level, bringing the person in harmony with higher spiritual truths. Divination allows us to unveil the healing spirits within the substance, or body. Thus revealing, or releasing energy from form, making us the vehicle for the incarnate.

"Orisha" as a term, is actually the combination of two Yoruba words (I discovered that the root word is from the Egyptian god Osiris who had other qualities. "Osh", meaning many. and "iri", meaning to do or many eyed. Osiris came to mean Omniscient.) "Ori" which is the reflective spark of human consciousness embedded in human essence, and "sha" which is the ultimate potentiality of that consciousness to enter into or assimilate itself into the divine consciousness". From this idea, we can see that given the right encouragement of the human

consciousness, man can heal himself along with the use of herbs and foods as special inducements. From this standpoint, the Orisha assist in the development of (iwa-pele) or balanced character. This is the premise of true Yoruba medicine. The connection between ones consciousness (Ori) and one's behavior (iwa-pele) is clearly seen as a way of maintaining a correct attitude towards nutrition and lifestyles in order to ward off sickness (negative spirits) and disease.

According to the theory of the Ifa Corpus, the oppressive forces known as "ajogun" cause disease. The Orisha are spirits of heaven, sent to continually wrestle with the human nature in order to uplift it — to purify it. The "ajogun" are the "demonic" beings. They are all earthly and heavenly forces whose destructive intent is to offset the human body. It is the job of the Oloogun (medicine healer) to help the patient overcome the opposing forces that disrupt their health.

## ***DIAGRAM 2. : Yoruba Philosophy of Creation***

**(The Roots of Yoruba Herbology)**

**(OLUDUMARE)**

**The Self- Existent Being One Source**

**Nature (Ashe)**

**The inherent force of all creation**

thought. When the Europeans came into Africa and saw the African dancing a in frenzy with their bodies covered in ashes, they did not understand or comprehend, so they labeled it primitive, savage and backward. They hadn't made the connection between the Creator, spirits and their manifestation in nature as the African had done. The Western mentality couldn't understand because of their materialistic way of seeing.

**Orisha Humans**

**(Angelic Forces) (Physical forms)**

**Dual Potentiality**

**(Evolution of human spirit)**

When understanding the African's use of demonic and spiritual agencies in medicine, it is important to understand that this concept is used merely as a cosmic-tool to explain physical phenomena in nature which is unique to African

## **Secrets of the Priesthood**

I

In the tradition of Yoruba wisdom, nature is, the language of the Divine. To commune with nature is to commune with the Divine, so healing is truly a religious rite with healer as priest. African societies have always acknowledged the link between medicine and religion by giving doctors priestly status. The priest is someone who has learned to "see" and "contact" the orishas of the plant spirit world. He makes friends of the orishas of nature and call upon them for help with everyday affairs. Their healing art is esoteric and is transmitted from one generation to another from family member to family member. Part of their training as priest/healer is to learn to interpret the language of nature. Out of this wisdom, there arose a (system of astrology, and numerology which afterwards was used to hide their secrets from the un-initiated.

This brings into focus the "astro-theological" attributions of the Yoruba system of medicine. Astrology and numerology provided a convenient means for classifying many forms of healing knowledge. The Yoruba priests made use of astrological principles when designing altars for the orishas, herbs for healing, protection against evil influences, and palaces for Ifa rulers. The priesthood depended upon plants, roots, barks, minerals, and metals in the compounding of remedies for human ailments, and the laws of the orishas were patterned after the harmony of the planetary spheres.

They also classified the zodiacal influences on the various structures and organs of the human body and the physiological processes associated with them. In each case, the planet, color, zodiac sign, the number, and musical note was carefully noted and influenced the selection of medicinal materials, and much of this herbal science is still in use by Yoruba priest today.

The healer is also a teacher. He is an historian with a masterful and well-trained memory in the oral history of the ancestors. He is like a walking encyclopedia of healing plants and their use to heal many diseases. He has been trained by his teacher, or Oriki to

memorize all the orishas and the genealogy of the great medicine men.

He is also a teacher of philosophy, religion and wisdom. He teaches the tribal ethics of the people and blessings of the Creator and the spirits. He usually teaches through thought-provoking stories and ancestral proverbs which reflect the understanding of the oneness of the universe and serves as a reminder that everything on earth has a purpose and plan. His knowledge and talents command respect and admiration. The profession is by no means a male-prerogative -- women too, are equally great priestess/healers in the Yoruba religion.

Most forms of African healing use the astral world of consciousness and spirit, which enables the healer to make his diagnosis. The astral world is that body through which emotion is experienced. The interplay of desire is felt in this subtle body and for this reason it is sometimes called the "desire" body. Here are experienced the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, fear and courage and so forth. Most individuals are functioning very strongly through this body, especially today in a world of sex, greed, and self-indulgence, and as a result much disease stems from the constant

chaotic interplay of energies within it.

According to the Yoruba philosophy, disease is really a lack of harmony between the spirit and the personality, a conflict between the lower and the higher Self. Disease usually takes root in our emotional blind spots. Disease is a call for help. Our being has somehow become separate from nature, and illness becomes a lack of wholeness. The various parts of our being are separated and the healer has the aim of helping the patient bring everything together in healing. Most people tend to look at the cause of disease at the physical level and see that the body's biochemistry is out of balance. But the biochemistry will have become out of balance because of our various desires for wrong food, desires which tend to make us ignore the laws of health. And we also cause disease through wrong or separative thoughts, or by our emotions pulling us in different directions. This attitude can isolate us and make us ill. Hence the Yoruba approach to medicine is to connect us to each other, the spirits of the universe, and the invisible forces in the human body. This dynamic expression of Yoruba medicine is a celebration of our connectedness with nature. And connection with nature is health.

Because the Osain system has many Orisha, which serve different purposes, we will only focus on Erinle-Orisha, the Orisha of medicine. The seven major Orishas are examined in Table 1\*.

In the body, the Erinle-Orisha can be understood in terms of metabolic energy, which activates, or stimulates the other Orisha. Each Orisha is characterized by certain attributes and is in charge of specific organ functions. Each has its dual force of ajogun (demonic force) and Orisha (positive force). The Orishas also have special places or main locations in the body where they can accumulate, or cause havoc and disease. Therefore, it is important to use the corresponding herbal treatment to correct the derangement (see Table 2).

\*The Yoruba's were obviously inspired with the seven Orishas by the ancient Egyptian's concept of the seven openings in the head.

### **OSAIN: The divinity-Orisha of Plants**

Herbal science was highly developed among the Africans of Yorubaland over ten thousand years ago. They had a large and complicated pantheon of orisha-divinities of the plant

kingdom. Among them are Erinle, Ogun, and Osain. One of the most important plant orishas that has come to my attention on the subject of plant medicines is Osain.

According to the ancient Yoruba, Osain is the orisha of botany, or herbology. Osain dwells in the forest, in the leaves, shrubs, and trees and knows the healing secrets of the plant kingdom. The energy of Osain is no single plant, but a spiritual force that holds the healing potential of every plant form within the forest.

All plants, or Ewe are thus seen as specific manifestations' of the divinity-orisha Osain which controls the entire plant kingdom and gives the ashe power to the plant's form. The spiritual energy of Osain within the world of plant form is capable of bringing forth the appropriate ashe power to heal the human body and its energy centers. With this science and the key to it, one can invoke the healing elements of Osain in herbal treatment.

## Ewe (Herbs)

T

he use of herbs and plants, called ewe in Yoruba, is of great importance. Herbs are picked for medicinal, and the spiritual powers they hold. In Africa, herbs are gathered by the Oloogun, or by the various types of herbalists who inhabit the regions where Yoruba medicine is practiced. The population can usually buy herbs either by private practice or from the marketplace in town. In the Americas and the Caribbean, Yoruba practitioners are also directed to use herbs as medicine. Here the Oloogun, or priests, as well as devotees alike gather herbs for medicine, baths, and religious artifacts. Because of the increasing interest and practice of Yoruba

Erinle	ATTRIBUTES
Orisha	
Obatala	Creator of Human Form, White purity. Cures illness and Deformities.
Elegba	Messenger of the Orisha, Holder of Ashe (power) among the Orisha He is the prime negotiator between negative and positive forces in the body, enforces the "Law of being". Helps to enhance the power of herbs.
Ogun	Orisha of Iron. He expands, he is divinity of clearing paths, specifically in respect to blockages or interruption of the flow of vital energy at various points in the body. He is the liberator.
Yemoja	Mother of Waters, Sexuality, Primal Waters. Nurturer. She is the amniotic fluid in the womb of the pregnant woman, as well as, the breasts that nurture. She is the protective energy of the feminine force.

**Table 1. The Seven Major  
Orishas**

Oshun	Sensuality, Beauty, Gracefulness, she symbolizes clarity and flowing motion, she has power to heal with cool water, she is also the divinity of fertility and feminine essence. Women appeal to her for childbearing and for the alleviation of female disorders. She is fond of babies and is sought if a baby becomes ill. She is known for her love of honey.	Obatala	brain, bones, white fluids of the body
Shango	Kingly, Virility, Masculinity, Fire, Lightning, Stones, Protector/Warrior, Magnetism. He possesses the ability to transform base substance into that which is pure and valuable.	Elegba	sympathetic nervous system, parasympathetic nervous System
Oya	Tempest, Guardian of the Cemetery, Winds of Change, Storms, Progression. She is usually in the company of her counterpart Shango. She is the deity of rebirth as thing must die so that new beginnings arise.	Yemoja	womb, liver, breasts, buttocks
		Oshun	circulatory system, digestive organs, elimination system, pubic area (female)
		Ogun	heart, kidney (adrenal glands), tendons, and sinews Shango reproductive system (male), bone marrow, life force or chi
		Oya	lungs, bronchial passages, mucous membranes

**Table 2. Physical Correspondence**

Erinle	PHYSICAL CORRESPONDENCE
Orisha	

Medicine in the New World, Nigerians and people from other African countries have begun to set up herbal businesses in increasing numbers. More and more plants and herbs, which are indigenous to Africa, are now being made accessible to devotees here in the Americas.

It is said that ewe (herbs) are for the "healing of Nations" and many health food stores provide them in powder, leaf, and capsule form. Adherents to traditional Yoruba medicine are usually advised to use herbs as medicine

before going to Western allopathic drugs for healing. There are many books written on the subject of herbology. Therefore, researching the possibilities of herbal use is recommended. Table 3 shows herbal directives.

**Table 3. The Ewe and Presiding Correspondence**

Orisha	EWE (HERBS) FOR MEDICINAL USAGE
Obatala	Skullcap, Sage, Kola Nut, Basil, Hyssop, Blue Vervain White Willow, Valerian.
Elegba	All Herbs
Yemoja	Kelp, Squawvine, Cohosh, Dandelion, Yarrow, Aloe, Spirulina, Mints, Passion Flower, Wild Yam Root
Oshun	Yellow Dock, Burdock, Cinnamon, Damiana, Anis, Raspberry, Yarrow, Chamomile, Lotus, Uva-Ursi, Buchu, Myrrh, Echinacea
Ogun	Eucalyptus, Alfalfa, Hawthorn, Bloodroot, Parsley, Motherwort, Garlic

Shango	Plantain, Saw Palmetto, Hibiscus, Fo-Ti, Sarsaparilla, Nettles, Cayenne
Oya	Mullein, Comfrey, Cherrybark, Pleurisy Root, Elecampane, Horehound, Chickweed

They provide examples of the ewe based on the presiding Orisha correspondence. It is best that novices seek out divination before attempting to get and prepare herbal formulas. People with more serious illnesses should seek a qualified herbalist to help guide them through the healing process.

The following is a recommended way to prepare these herbs. The herbs can be used alone or in combination with other herbs. Add the herbs to a pot of mildly boiling water (to prepare a decoction). Let the herbs steep for about thirty minutes before straining. The remaining herbal solution is then prepared as a tea. In some instances the herbal solutions are used in diluted liquid form for enemas. Enemas are among one of the most effective treatment in cleaning out the colon, which is the seat of many diseases. In Yorubic medicine, sugar should never be added to herbal solutions. Honey may be used, however, along with lemon.

For thousands of years, traditional healers of West Africa have used hundreds of herbs to treat many types of diseases. In Nigeria, West African healers are reputed to know the medicinal use of 700 plants. Traditional African doctors used herbs to effectively treat skin infections, intestinal parasites, catarrh, cancer, liver disorders, convulsions, venereal diseases, bronchitis, diabetes, urinary tract infections, conjunctivitis, and many other complaints. Cayenne pepper, kola nuts, Fever leaf, Kaolin, Guaiacum, sarsaparilla, sassafras, Aloe Vera, and Rauwolfia are a few of the African plants that have made their way into the Western Pharmacopeia.

In Yoruba medicine, preparing and compounding herbs is a personal ritual that encourages a shift in consciousness that brings the Yoruba healer an inner awareness of the subtle properties of the plants -- an awareness that helps bring the healer into an active and more spiritual role in diagnosing and healing. African herbalists turned to what was on hand and natural. Every flower, shrub, and tree was used to treat disease. This use and wisdom with plants was based on the African "Doctrine of Signatures". According to this Science, every plant in nature has its medicinal purpose

written on it. The early African herbalists had no textbooks with definitions of herb use, their text was the plant world itself. Every plant was believed to possess therapeutic virtues according to what was written on its leaves, stem, flower, fruit or root, and these were duly classified.

Preparing herbs for basic use can be easy and interesting to do. You want to use and prepare dry herbs for future use because fresh plants may not be available at certain times of the year. These herbs are then stored in jars in a dark cool place for future use. Generally, dried flowers and leaves may be kept for one year. Dried roots and barks, however, can be stored up to four years. Fresh bulk herbs are sold worldwide from natural health stores, African-Caribbean markets, and Chinatown herb shops. However, industrious African American herbalists and entrepreneurs are developing and manufacturing their own products.

When drying, spread the herbs out on newspaper and put in a dark place. Never dry herbs in direct sunlight. A dry area with good air circulation is best. Dry the herbs until they are nice and brittle. Then remove them and store in jars. After a few days, check the stored herbs to

see if any moisture has accumulated. If so, you need to dry them further. The herbs are useless if any mold forms on them.

The root herbs take a little more time and care to dry. As a general rule, you slice the roots lengthwise so you will have thinner strips. Place them on a screen or newspaper, and let them dry in a warm dry area turning them frequently. When they are completely dry, place them in an air-tight storage container. In order to protect the roots and barks from insects and mold put several drops of camphor on an absorbent cloth and place the cloth between waxed paper. Put this in the bottom of the container and place the roots on top. The camphor acts as a natural preservative and keeps mold and bacteria from forming. Always label and date your containers, and store in a cool place.

When drying barks, following the same principle as with the roots. The bark is usually taken from the branch of the tree. The inner bark is the part used by herbalists. The tough outer bark is pulled away.

## **Ewe Preparation**

### **H**

erbs may be taken as a tea, fluid extract, syrup, powder, capsule, or tablet form. However, freshly brewed medicinal herbs in a "decoction" or "infusion" is an effective way to derive the healing benefit of the herbs. The herbs are easily assimilated in the body in this form, producing fast results. When making an herbal tea (infusion or decoction), the herbs should be cooked in a glass, ceramic, or stainless-steel container so that metal cookware do not spoil the tea. Always use distilled or spring water if possible. While preparing the herbs, say a prayer or chant to "Erlie", the orisha of plants. This helps to bring forth the spiritual powers of the plant ashe.

To make an "infusion", steep the leaves, or flowers in a tightly covered container that has just been brought to a boil. Never boil leaf or flower herbs. This will destroy the volatile oils in

the herbal properties. Allow the herbs to steep for about twenty minutes in the covered container. Then strain the tea and sweeten with honey for taste.

Another way to extract the essence from herbs is to "decocct" them. Any hard substance such as stems, barks, and roots, more time is needed to extract the properties from the herbs. The roots are added to water and brought to a boil. Simmer for about one hour, and then allow the mixture to sit covered until cool. After cooling the liquid thoroughly, strain out the roots, pour the liquid into a glass container, label and refrigerate it. The tea can be refrigerated for up to four days and reheated as needed.

You may use this pre-mixed extract by adding about one tablespoon of extract to one cup of hot water as a treatment or tonic. Leaf herbs and roots can also be combined into special formulas. The decoction herbs are poured over the leaf and flowers and allowed to steep for 10 to 15 minutes. Again strain and sweeten tea as desired.

### **Notes on Dosage and amount**

Remember when preparing herbal tea that dried herbs are more concentrated, So you need

to use less. Fresh herbs have much more bulk so you would use more when preparing tea. The Standard rule is to use one tablespoon of fresh herb or one teaspoon of the dried herb for each cup of boiling water. The general dose of a medicinal tea is one cup three times a day. Dosages for children should be proportionately less than for adults. If treating chronic conditions, you will need to take the herbs over a period of weeks before seeing results. It is best to drink herbs in the morning and evening  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour before or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours after a meal.

There are many ways to use herbs on a daily basis for preventive health care. One of the pleasures of preparing and using herbs is the spiritual communion one experiences with the plant world. Your whole family benefits and you are helping them to appreciate the healing wisdom of nature.

## **Flower Spirit Preparation**

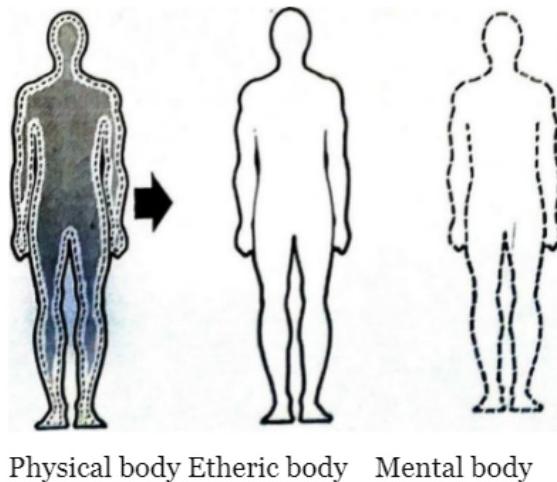
Y

oruba healers employed plant spirit medicine as a way to heal the emotional, mental, and spiritual bodies of the human being. Flower spirit medicine, or flower essence has the ability to energetically impact upon those higher bodies, and their effects are ultimately able to filter down to the physical body. Yoruba healers discovered the effects of the various flower spirits through observation and contacting the orisha spirit world.

Increasingly, we are discovering what Africans knew thousands of years ago, that there is a relationship between the physical body and the higher energy bodies which contribute to the multi-dimensional nature of human beings. Our spiritual, or "etheric" body play a major role in maintaining our health. Energy disturbances in the etheric body precede the manifestation of disease in the physical body. One of the best

ways to 'correct abnormal patterns in the mental and physical bodies is to administer frequency-specific subtle energy in the form of plant spirit.

When African healers use the term "spirit energy", they are merely using another term for "frequency", or "vibration". We know from quantum physics that the material creation, everything that we can see, touch, hear, taste, or smell is made from the same primary source of which everything in the universe is composed, including our physical and spiritual bodies. We know this as "Universal Energy". The vibrational rate of this energy determines the density of physical matter. Energy which vibrates at a slow frequency is referred to as physical matter. Energy which vibrates at a high frequency is referred to as subtle matter. Subtle matter (spirit) is just as real as physical matter; its vibration is simply faster. See diagram below.



Flower spirit medicines are usually tinctures which are charged with a specific frequency of subtle energy. The actual spirit, of course, is the electromagnetic pattern of the plant form. And this pattern is found in the flower part. The esoteric text of the Ifa goes into great detail on their use in Yoruba tradition. In the book **Flower Essences and Vibrational Healing** by Gurudas, Flower essence healing is elegantly described:

"Flowers were and are the very essence and the highest concentration of the life-force in the plant. They are the crowning experience of the plant's growth. They are a combination of the

etheric properties [of the plant] and are at the height of the life-force, so they are often used in the fertility portions of the plant's growth..."

Essences prepared from the flowers are merely an etheric imprint; nothing physical gets transferred. In this work, you are dealing strictly with the ethereal vibration of the plant, the intelligence of it. The sun upon striking the water melds into the water the life-force of the flower, and this is transferred to people when they assimilate these vibrational essences."

According to this interpretation, when a flower essence is ingested into the body, it follows a specific energy channel which is transferred to the circulatory system (the bloodstream). Next, the spirit energy settles between the circulatory system and the nervous system where an electromagnetic field is created by the polarity of these two systems. It is here that an intimate connection is made between the life-force and consciousness that the Yorubas called the orisha-internals. From these systems, spirit energy enters the various subtle bodies, and the seven major chakras.

Even more fascinating is the flower spirit path is determined by the type of mental or spiritual affliction that the person is suffering

from. Most of our spiritual and emotional states involve the solar plexus orisha-chakra (Oshun). It is there that we feel the impacts of fear, anxiety, and a host of other emotional feelings. In extreme fear, the sacral and throat orishas become involved which results in the loss of control of the urinary and anal sphincter muscles (Shango), or temporary paralysis of the vocal chords. Flower spirit remedies without exception are very effective in treating the solar plexus and astral chakras. Some of these include:

- Sweet Chestnut
- Mimulus
- Holly
- Larch
- Pine
- Wild Rose
- Honeysuckle
- Vervain
- Water Violet

Of great interest to the reader is the

preparation of flower spirits. Yoruba healers would pick the flower blooms from specific trees and plants at certain times according to the orisha indications. The medicines are prepared by floating the blooms in bowls of water and exposing them to sunlight for several hours, or by simply boiling the blooms in water. Alcohol is then added to preserve the solution, which result from this preparation. This form of preparation is critical in charging the water with an energetic imprint of the flower's vibrational spirit. In addition to Flower spirit medicine, there is another form of plant spirit medicine which uses no physical substance from the plant at all. Certain orisha spirits help to heal Specific levels of the Higher Self. We will examine this science in greater detail in a later chapter.

## **Diagnosis and Treatment**

### **A**

ccording to the Ifa Corpus, the "ajogun" is the cause of all chronic diseases. Nature (Ashe) has made us so that our spirit instinctively operates according to the seven Orishas, or divine attributes. Every human ailment can be classified according to which of these angelic forces is disrupted at the time. You will remember that ajogun (demons) is the term used for negative tendencies in the mind/spirit. The Orishas are the heaven-sent forces of purity that combats them.

Each Orisha exists in us as our divine nature for alignment with our Creator, and our higher evolution, because everything in nature expands, evolves, and grows. As you increase in Cosmic Intelligence, you will live according to the seven principles of life: 1) Ifarabale: Composure; 2) Owo: Respect; 3) Suuru: Patience; 4) Eso: Caution; 5) Imo: Knowledge;

6) Ogbon: Wisdom; and 7) Oye: Understanding. Then and only then will you open the "third eye of Oninmila", Cosmic Consciousness and live in harmony with the universe. When that happens, you will be free of human suffering and disease.

The goal of Yoruba diagnosis is to get in touch with the interaction of your internal Orishas, with the rhythms of the universe, and with the spiritual forces which have their impact on the human Ashe, or essence. When you are able to bring your mind, and spirit to that, and feel the flow of the internal Orishas, you are experiencing a re-alignment with universal Onement. This is why rhythmic dance and music along with Plants of the earth are so important in African medicine. Because they connect us to the three principal forces: Nature, Spirit, and physical form, which lead to an improved healing process and a return to health.

Determining which Orisha is out of alignment allows us to treat the current condition as each Orisha internal reveals signs and symptoms that something is awry in your mind, body, and spirit. We then treat the particular tendencies of the out of alignment Orisha with specific herbs and foods to coax your Orisha back to its normal position. Once

you are back in alignment, you can embark on the lifetime maintenance regimen designed to keep your Ashe essence in balance.

In diagnosis, we start with the symptoms and manifestations of the disease, the emotions, behavior patterns, positions of the body where the disease has manifested, color of specific bodily fluids, the environmental factors, stress, emotional imbalances, and other immaterial aspects to health, which must get at least as much attention as the physical ones. This multi-dimensionality is the wisdom and paradigm of African medical theory.

As one can see, we have a useful system of categorization that applies to all levels of disease and treatment. To understand the application of Yorubic herbology, let's take as an example a person suffering from a bronchial-pulmonary condition including cough, and spitting of white mucus. The approach of the African healer would be to determine which of the Orishas are out of alignment. He would do this by taking into account the patient's manifest symptoms along with locating the main areas in the body where the miss-alignment (disease) occurs. Our patient would be considered to have a mis-alignment in the "Oya" and "Obatala" Orishas.

Oya-Orisha predominates in the lungs, bronchial passages, and the mucous membranes. The Obatala-Orisha is responsible for white fluids of the body, which is located in the throat region of Obatala-Orisha (also known in Yoga as the 5th Chakra, see Diagram 3). The condition can be corrected by prescribing the patient with Comfrey and Sage, as an herbal tea, or applied externally by a spiritual bath.

Let's use as another example someone who has diarrhea along with abdominal cramps. Applying Orisha diagnostic principles, we would identify the source of the problem in the Oshun-Orisha that presides over the digestive organs, and elimination system. In order to correct the mis-alignment of Oshun, we would appease it by prescribing Raspberry leaves and Yarrow combined with honey in the form of a tea, taken three times a day. The honey is essential because Oshun-Orisha is known for her love of honey, which brings about her healing qualities. Raspberry and Yarrow are both cooling herbs that are effective in removing stomach cramps and relieving diarrhea. The power to heal with cool water is characteristic to Oshun-Orisha which enhances the healing properties in the herbs.

### ***Diagram 3. The Chakras-Orisha of the Human Body.***

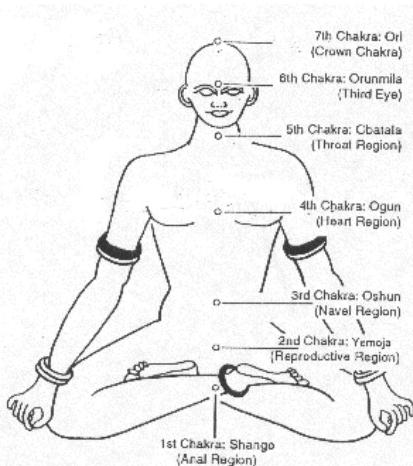


Diagram 3: The Orisha-Chakra of the Human Body

***Diagram adapted from Baba Ifa Karade's Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts (Samuel Weiser, Inc.)***

Orisha diagnosis is amazingly comprehensive. Because you cannot touch or

see the internal Orishas in the human body, the only sure way to verify they are out of alignment is to use thousands of years of ancient wisdom based upon it. The Orisha Correspondence chart is part of this ancient African wisdom.

As it happens, all seven major Orishas are present in everyone, but the most prominent one, signals the particular Orisha that is out of sync. The seven major orishas can also be viewed as subtle vibrations in the physiology, which directly influence the flow of vital energy. If these normal vibrations are disrupted, then orishas will give us a clue that our nature is out of balance.

Bodies subjected to dietary abuse, and mental and emotional imbalances over the years can bring two, or three Orishas out of line which can progress to more complicated illnesses not specific to any one Orisha mode. In this case, the basic approach is to treat the multiple Orishas at once matching the corresponding Ewe (herbs) that balance them. For this, Yoruba healers have developed special herbs in combination along with special rituals for more complicated diseases.

A man in his mid-thirties came to me for consultation that I diagnosed as having three

Orisha imbalances, He had a chronic headache, which is associated with the disruption of the 6th Orisha located in the head. The man also complained that he was experiencing back pains and fainting spells, or simply lingering fatigue. He would take Ibuprofen to relieve the symptoms, but this was only temporary relief, and the symptoms would reappear like clockwork.

After performing a full Orisha diagnosis, I determined that the 3rd Orisha (kidneys) was disrupting the normal vibrations of the 4th (Heart) and 6th (Head) Orishas which had manifested the aches and pains with distressing frequency. The root of the problem was that this man did not drink sufficient water, and was dehydrated. The lack of sufficient water causes stress on the kidneys and the heart, which will manifest in the form of back pains and headaches. I told him not to worry, and urged him to drink at least two quarts of water a day. It is at root a spiritual concern because of the long-term damage done to the internal Orishas, So, we must treat the spiritual behavior as well as the physical. So in addition to the water, I also prescribed the following herbal formula to be taken as a tea three times a day until there was a re-alignment of all three Orishas, I also

suggested that he make some lifestyle changes in diet and awareness:

- parsley (to tonify Ogun Orisha)
- hyssop (to settle Orunmila Orisha)
- yellow dock (to tonify the blood and water of Oshun Orisha.)

After three weeks of the recommended regimen, all of the symptoms had cleared up and re-alignment was restored. It is important to remember that any Orisha can cause any symptom. This is because one Orisha internal out of phase can cause other Orisha internals to go out of line.

Sometimes African healers must deal with more serious diseases that often goes far beyond what simple treatments alone can undo. Then he must progress to more advanced Yorubic therapies and spiritual techniques, which has been developed to deal with chronic conditions of all sorts.

For example, hypertension, also know as high blood pressure, is one of the most common and most serious chronic adult diseases. This illness is responsible for strokes, heart attacks,

and kidney failure.

Approximately 50 million Americans have hypertension, but the disease has its harshest effects on African-Americans: one of three black Americans, and 71 percent over the age of sixty has it. And for reasons that are not well understood by Western doctors, Blacks don't seem to respond as well to standard drugs as whites do. This is largely due to the genetic predisposition inherent in black Americans. For those suffering from this chronic illness, Yoruba herbal principles offer a natural alternative to conventional drug therapy.<sup>8</sup>

High blood pressure stresses the arterial system, increases the workload on the heart, and is often associated with increased activity of the sympathetic nervous system and adrenal glands. According to Yoruba medicine, Elegba (sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system) and Ogun (heart, kidneys) divinities govern these two aspects of the body.

Yorubic healers also associate the heart with emotional storms, because it is so intimately connected to the autonomic nervous system. High blood pressure is caused by the interruption of Elegba and Ogun Orishas. Elegba is the messenger of the internal Orishas,

and is the primary negotiator between negative and positive forces in the body. Elegba also enforces the "Law of being". When one's being, or emotional state is in peace and happiness, there is well being and health. On the contrary, when there are negative emotion (demons) such as uncontrollable anger, fits of rage, frustration, and the inability to give and receive love in a nurturing way, the negative of Elegba-Orisha is dominant which results in increased blood pressure.

You will remember that Elegba is the divinity that negotiates with the demonic forces that can overtake the spirit. Elegba is the force of purity that combats them just as the mind communicates with the physical functions in the body.

In American society, African-Americans can be vulnerable to many negative influences, which contribute to hypertension. They are:

- Unwholesome surroundings
- Negative emotions
- Anger
- Fear
- Contact with racial prejudice

- Psychological stress
- Violence
- Family problems.

Many studies by black psychiatrists have demonstrated that black hypertension is the result of the emotional toil of racism, poor socioeconomic condition, and stress. The problem can be reduced to self-esteem. Many blacks in American society must daily face circumstances that constantly tries to make them feel inferior. The lower the self-esteem, the greater the stress.<sup>9</sup>

Anger is another aspect that is closely linked to self-esteem, which is heightened by racism, or just perceived racism.

These are some of the many different kinds of influences that can increase negative energies in the Elegba-Orisha. In the following pages, I outline the kind of herbs, foods, rituals, lifestyles, that African medicine recommends to help African-Americans regain spiritual composure and physical health.

The other Orisha, which also contributes to hypertension, is Ogun-Orisha, the Orisha of Iron. He expands, and is the divinity of clearing

paths, specifically in respect to blockages or interruptions of the flow of vital energy at various points in the body. He is the liberator. Unfortunately, it is very easy to interfere with this pathway, and when we do so, we slip out of alignment with our natural balanced being.

The spiritual state of Elegba and Ogun Orishas at the time of high blood pressure episodes is an important consideration in Yoruba herbal practice. The two divinities control the automatic nervous system. In particular, the nervous system is divided into two functions, the Sympathetic nervous system, and the Parasympathetic system. These two functions control heartbeat, breathing, and peristalsis. It is the sympathetic aspect of Elegba that enables us to cope with physical and environmental stress. If the sympathetic division of this system is dominant, it indicates negative forces in the body, which makes high blood pressure more likely. The parasympathetic division, whose positive influence extends to the heart, opposes the sympathetic influence. If parasympathetic nervous activity is dominant, Elegba-Orisha channels positive force to the Ogun-Orisha.

On the other hand, high blood pressure can

also be brought on by over activity of sympathetic nerves and excessive adrenal stimulation. Let me first explain from the Yorubic view.

In Orisha physiology, the heart region is one of the seven great centers (Ogun-Orisha) that organize the flow of energy around the body. The fourth, or heart Orisha participates in emotional connections to other people and the world beyond the self. The Ogun-Orisha is the first of the centers concerned with "spiritual" matters. If Ogun's energy is blocked at this level through failure to open the heart, it cannot reach and activate the fifth (Obatala), sixth (Orunmila), and seventh (Ori) Orishas, which controls Cosmic Consciousness which allows us to open the "third eye". (Refer to Diagram 3.) From a spiritual standpoint blocked hearts and high blood pressure mirror the activity of our internal Orishas, and our ability to manage our feelings.

From this, we can see that the nervous energy of Elegba Orisha is intimately interconnected with the vital energy of Ogun-Orisha. Looking at the physical correspondence, Ogun controls the adrenal glands (Kidneys) which promotes the function of the sympathetic

and parasympathetic systems in the brain. The kidneys are responsible for secreting adrenal like chemicals, which influence the sympathetic response in the body, increasing the heart rate, and the blood pressure. The balancing of the Elegba and Ogun divinities is important in regulating blood flow.

Under Yorubic herbal directives, nervines and diuretics are useful for such conditions if they are combined to have the maximum effect on helping to negotiate the forces of Elegba and Ogun. One must "liberate the heart" in order to fulfill the "law of being". The principle is as follows:

Internal Orisha	Orisha Principle	Ewe Properties	Ewe (Herbs)
Elegba	The Law of being	Nervines	Hyssop Jungle Root  Black Haw Blue Vervain Scull cap Lady's slipper Lila of the Valley
Ogun	Liberating the Heart	Diuretics	Garlic Eucalyptus Alfalfa Blood Root Parsley Hawthorn

The following blood pressure tonic has been used with excellent results:

- Hyssop 1 tablespoon
- Jungle Root 1 tablespoon
- Garlic 1 crushed clove
- Eucalyptus 1 drop of oil (more than 1 drop can be toxic)

One cup of this formula should be taken three times a day. To prepare, mix all the above in a cup of boiling water and let brew for 1 minute. Strain the resultant liquid before drinking.

## **Orisha Internals**

### **W**

hen the Yoruba priests use the term "Orisha", they are not referring to a particular organ or part of the body. What they are referring to are modes of vital forces that exist in the human spirit. Yoruba priest Baba Karade describes the existence of the Orisha Internals:

"Theosophical questions in regards to where the Orisha literally dwell arise when devotees begin to sense the unfolding of the Orisha's divine attributes from within. The answers are relatively simple, yes the Orisha dwell within the human existence. Eastern and Western alike maintain that the holy ones-sacred entities, prophets, angels — do have a focal point in the vast dimensions of the human mind and body. Yogic chakras,

as internal wheels of energy that exist in the physical/spiritual body, are examined in this light... Through actual experience and research, it has been noted that within the Orishas, regardless of cultural persuasion, there exist psycho- hormones, nerve plexi, and divinities."<sup>10</sup>

Along with the seven major Orishas mentioned, there is the physical body and its level of mind, which exist and work in the tangible world, but the Orishas exist in different dimensions, each maintained by the vital force (Elegba) necessary for and appropriate to that dimension. This does not mean they are separate entities, but rather, are parts of an organic whole. Each Orisha/body has within itself energy centers for controlling the flow of the life force and a system of energy channels. The channels are called Nadis and the centers controlling them are known as Orishas. Besides being a control center in each dimension, an Orisha works as a center of interchange between the physical and the Astral, and between the Astral and causal dimensions. Through the Orishas, subtle energy in the Astral body can be

transformed into energy for the physical dimension, thereby providing the physical body with essential life energy.

According to the Ife Corpus, the relation of the manifest universe to Oludumare (One Source) is in its Oneness. And after the creation of Ashe (Nature), Angelic forces (Orishas) and human form, everything took on a movement of change, a flux and flow, a pulse of life.

The qualities, or attributes of the Orishas are distributed throughout the various parts of the human organism, and contact with such attributes releases those qualities. By making contact with the Orisha internals, we receive the healing powers of their attributes using various herbs and foods as the instrument.

As with most holistic systems around the world, Yorubic priests believe that most diseases have their site in the colon. It is believed that the colon can become infested with rotten food and gas pockets that can build up toxic wastes. If allowed to accumulate, the waste product will form into bacteria and parasites, which will reabsorb into bodily tissues causing many chronic illnesses.

According to Yorubic herbology, Shango is considered the initiator of all change in the

human ashe. Change is the movement of one of the spiritual forces in relation to the other Orishas. Shango is the first Orisha, which can give rise to the other, as night begets day and day begets night. The underlying element of the universe is Shango (fire), and all things are changed for fire, and fire for all things.

Thus, the spiritual fire of Shango is transmitted successfully into air, water, and earth; only to go through a similar process as they ascent again into fire. Looking at the Orisha physical correspondence, we see that Shango has its focal point in the anal region (1st Orisha). It is here that many chronic diseases, or demons are formed. Our internal biochemical environment reflects the Shango composition in the food we eat. The alignment of Shango-Orisha is reflected in the quality of the anal region of our bodies as well as the state of Oshun (elimination system). Thus, their relationship is dynamic and their interplay produces growth, transformation as well as disease and death.

Therefore, proper care of the digestive and elimination organs is a very important aspect of Yorubic medicine. In treatment we would use the enema to rid the colon of toxic waste. On the

other hand, decreasing the amount of red meats in our diets reduces the amount of rotten foods in the colon. Red meat takes approximately six hours to digest, whereas fruits and vegetables take only 30 minutes to digest. This has far-reaching implication in our need to change our basic diet, and the healthy life of our people. I will discuss diet in later pages.

## The Yoruba System of Orisha Energy Centers

B

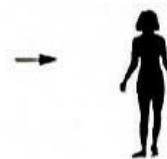
efore going into the practical aspects of diagnosis and treatment of the orishas, or "energy centers", it is necessary to touch briefly upon the existence of the energy bodies in man.

In the esoteric text of the Ifa, which provides the very core of Yoruba religious philosophy, one finds continual reference to the invisible etheric bodies (Dya), and soul of man. According to this mystical wisdom, the human body is a series of light frequency energy systems which integrate into the cosmic scheme of life. These energy systems have an anatomy and pattern of their own which through their movement and fluctuations determine the appearance of activity of the physical form, and Yoruba diagnosis and healing is based upon this fact. The etheric body, the densest of the subtle energetic bodies, vitalizes and energizes the

physical body, and integrates the individual into the energy field of the earth.

The physical body on the other hand, is made up of the various organic networks, comprised of dense, liquid and gaseous materials, and this enables the soul (mind) to express itself in the physical realm. Through its existence, the five senses are able to operate on the physical level, and progressively through stages of spiritual enlightenment they are able to register the impact of energies flowing to it from the higher realms.

There are seven fields, or sub-harmonics of physical matter from the physical-etheric unit. They are organized as follows:



Subtle energy bodies-----Spirit  
body

Mental body

Astral body

Etheric body

Physical body ----- Gaseous  
Liquid  
Dense

The subtle energy bodies exist as a unified field containing a variety of high frequency vibrations, or photons which are held together under the direction of the soul. The physical body is the densest form of all the energy fields. Each of these fields, or cosmic light bodies, is connected to the physical cellular structure through a complex network of energy threads called "nadis".

The etheric body has three main functions: to receive energy from the sun; to assimilate and circulate it to all parts of the body; and to act as the template or blueprint for all physical growth. It also acts as the mediator, rather like the bridge between our higher states of consciousness and the physical brain and nervous system. Energetic changes occur at the etheric level before becoming manifest as a physical disease. Therefore, it's important that we maintain proper organization and health of the etheric body. When this happens the physical body reflects this interchange of

energies as a state of good health.

There are a number of factors which disturb the even circulation of energies throughout the energy bodies, and these can be classified as "blockages", "congestion", "over-stimulation", and "lack of coordination". Congestion of the etheric body is a major cause of disease. This congestion can be spiritual, or due to toxins found in the Orishas, or energy centers within the etheric body. These orishas are of vital importance in healing, because they are the focal points which receive energies for the purpose of vitalizing the physical body. It is through these energy centers that the healing energies are directed towards the diseased areas of the body in order to bring about a state of balance, or health.

Blockages, or congestion can be classified as "objective" or "subjective". Objective blockages may be toxic, bacterial, or chemical. Inherited diseases can leave toxic residue patterns which may disrupt the individual's health for years to come. Drugs also leave their subtle vibrations, as do chemical pesticides which pollute our food and environment. Blockages may also be "subjective" factors found in the orisha internals, within the etheric body.

Where there is a blockage of the flow of energy through an orisha, congestion can occur, and this may be found in the etheric, or astral bodies.

If there is a "lack of coordination" between the etheric body and the physical body this can result in poor health as well. This happens in the case of trance possession where the astral body is pulled out of the physical body in order to let an "ajogun" (demon) utilize the physical body. Epilepsy, debilitation, impotence, obsession, and laryngitis express different degrees of the lack of coordination between the etheric and physical body. We will deal with these matters in more detail further on in the book.

The orisha internals can also be damaged by traumatic events, such as sudden dramatic, emotional shocks. Distressful Fears or anxiety can create wear and tear on the emotions to the point of disturbing functional balance. This is because the orishas are usually found blocked either at the point where the energy enters, or at the point where it leaves to flow into the etheric body. If the energy blockage occurs at the entry point, the energy flowing in is frequently pushed back to its point of origin on the astral or mental bodies. This brings about psychological

disorders and endocrine dysfunction.

The orisha internals are located on the surface of the etheric body. These orishas originate from cosmic energies according to Yoruba teachings. The orishas in the etheric body come into being where the strands of energy cross and recross each other. The seven major orishas form where these strands cross each other 21 times. These cross points are where "Elegba" exist which is the prime negotiator between negative and positive forces in the body. This is why Yoruba priests refer to Elegba as the "trickster". Although there are many orishas throughout the body, we shall only be concerned with the function of the

The Orisha internals have three main functions.

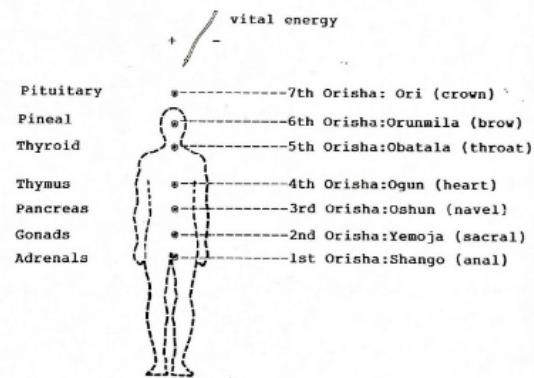
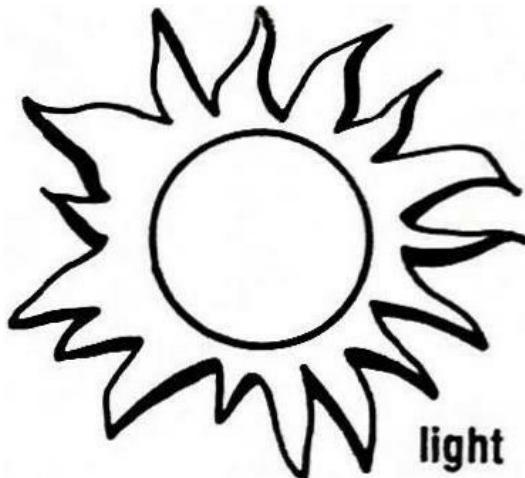
1. To vitalize the physical body.
2. To cultivate self-consciousness.
3. To channel spiritual energy in order to bring one into a state of spiritual enlightenment.

Much of the ill health we see today can be traced directly to the condition of the orisha internals, as they determine the proper functioning of the above energy systems. These

orisha internals must be working properly in order to supply the physical body with the right amount and quality of energy. Any

### **Diagram #4**

#### The Orisha Energy Centers and glandular Systems



deviation from the natural flow of energy creates an imbalance which may ultimately lead to organic dysfunction. Let us now give a more detailed description of the orisha internals that occur along the spinal points in the human body.

#### The Seven Major Spinal Orisha The 7th Orisha—Ori (Crown):

The crown orisha, or "Ori" is located at the top of the head. It is said by Yoruba priests to be our spiritual center, and helps to facilitate the emotional and spiritual development of human consciousness. The crown or seventh orisha is

considered to be the highest vibrational center in the subtle body, and is associated with the inner spiritual quest. This orisha is usually active in individuals involved in the religious or mystical journey. The unfoldment of this orisha allows one to experience the understanding of ourselves as part of the Divine Consciousness. Because it is the "reflective spark" of human consciousness, it contains within it a replica of each orisha internal, and this is a reflection of the Universal principle which contains the total pattern of the human being. Ori, so to speak, is the "throne" of Divine Consciousness which allows "sha" (human consciousness) to enter into. When this happens, the initiate is able to relay cosmic principles of truth from the spiritual realms.

On the physical level, this orisha is connected to the pituitary gland and the cerebral cortex and nervous system. When the crown orisha is working in balance, synchronization between the left and right hemispheres of the brain is achieved. This brings about focused consciousness, which in turn, contains the solution to all human questions. In this state, one becomes a "human oracle", capable of giving spiritual guidance. Ancient Africans suggest that the pituitary gland

is the seat of the soul.

Recent experiments have shown that the pituitary gland reacts to the stimulation of light. The development of this orisha creates a vast aura of light, which eclipses every other orisha. Disruption in the flow of energy of this center can manifest diseases such as hypertension, certain forms of brain diseases, nervous disorders and psychological problems.

#### **The 6th Orisha-Orunmila (Third eye):**

The sixth orisha is often referred to as the "third eye". It is located between the eyebrows, just above the eyes. The past mystical associations of this center with the pineal gland is well established in ancient wisdom. From a spiritual standpoint, Yoruba spiritual teachers consider the sixth orisha to be the center of "Orunmila" the mystical prophet of the Yoruba religion. It is associated with the "integrated personality", which is the seat of intuition and the subtle organ involved in clairvoyance. This center is one of the psychic centers that is gradually developed through the practice of meditation. The individual who has opened this center has the ability to "see within", an aspect of consciousness related to introspection. This

gives the person vision and inward awareness to see the causes between the outer and inner worlds, the aspects of duality in nature.

On the physical level, this center is associated with the pineal gland, the spinal cord, as well as the eyes, ears, nose, and sinuses. Over-stimulation of this orisha can physically manifest in the form of sinus problems, catarrh, hayfever, cataracts, and major endocrine imbalances.

#### **The 5th Orisha-Obatala (Throat):**

The throat orisha, or "obatala" is located at the back of the neck, reaching up into the medulla oblongata attached to the brain. This is a powerful orisha and very active in the human family, being related to the higher creative faculty such as the creation of world and song. In Yoruba religious tradition, "Obatala" and "Oya" is important in communicating with the orisha World. These orishas function during clairaudience hearing at an astral level. It is during this psychic activity that the orishas communicate with the healer. Speech and sound are the means by which we vibrationally express ideas and communications to each other.

This center alone has influence over the major glands in the neck region such as the

thyroid and parathyroid glands, the mouth, vocal cords, lungs, as well as the cervical vertebrae. It also governs the entire alimentary canal. The thyroid and parathyroid glands are essential to the endocrine system. The parathyroid is responsible for regulating calcium metabolism in bone cells through the secretion of PTH (parathyroid hormone). The thyroid regulates the oxidative processes and effects calcium and bone metabolism in a manner opposite to that of the parathyroid. In terms of its physical correspondence, this orisha governs over the skeletal activity and white fluids of the body.

Abnormalities of the energy flow of this orisha may cause a multitude of symptoms such as vertigo, allergies, anemia, fatigue, menstrual irregularities, sore throat, laryngitis, gland tumors, cancer of the larynx, asthma and other respiratory problems may stem from an imbalance of this center.

#### **4th Orisha-Ogun (Heart):**

The fourth orisha is the heart center. According to the Ifa, the thread of the life principle depends on ogun which is anchored in the heart center. The attribute of Ogun represents courage manifesting as the lack of

involves the "fight or flight" response designed to protect the expression of life on the earth plane. The heart orisha is closely tied to the expression of love and compassion. Correctly awakened, this orisha transforms the heart and is integral to an individual's ability to express love. This includes both self-love as well as the expression of love toward others. And of course, the highest form of spiritual love is unconditional love towards others. Through it, the "Love of God is shed abroad".

The orisha Ogun is also responsible for clearing the paths to other orishas in the energy systems. When this center is disrupted in its flow, it produces amoral, irresponsible individual's. At present, many people experience great difficulty in developing the potential of this center, the so-called "inner heart". This is reflected in the general imbalances which affects the physical heart and personality. A contributing factor to the high incidence of heart disease occurs in those individuals who fail to recognize the significance of the energetic link between heart disease, the heart orisha, and one's ability to express love. For example, doctor's frequently succumb to heart trouble.

Doctors unconsciously seek to work through the heart center in detaching themselves from the emotional aspects of the patients they treat, and this predisposes them to heart disease.

The physical link to this energy center the thymus gland, the heart, and the entire circulatory system. Most of the organs associated with the heart orisha help to nurture and promote the flow of vital energy to the rest of the body. Reduction of this energy flow coming in to the heart to risha can contribute toward coronary artery disease, heart attacks, and strokes, an illness which affects thousands of people each year

One of the most important links between the heart orisha and the physical heart organ is with the thymus gland. The thymus is described in Yoruba medicine as being involved in "hyper-immune", or "auto-immune" reactions, and could prove important in such diseases as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis, childhood diabetes, HIV, and AIDS. Medical science now recognizes the important role that the thymus gland plays in the regulation of the immune response. The hormones produced by this gland called "thymosin", influences an individual's ability to fight off disease and

infections throughout their entire life by stimulating the activity of different types of "T-lymphocytes". Lymphocytes, or T helper-cells, are blood cells that assist antibody-producing cells in removing foreign proteins and viruses from the body.

The important point is that many immunologic diseases may be indirectly influenced by the regulation of the thymus gland. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), one of the most devastating diseases of our time, is associated with the loss of T-cells, and viral infection. From a Yoruba point of view, the reduction in T-helper cells is caused not only by the HIV, or AIDS infection but also by the blockage of energy in the heart orisha/thymus gland center which predisposes the individual to the infection in the first place. In addition to blockage in the heart orisha, many AIDS victims show energy blockage in the Yemoja-orisha (reproductive region), and other orishas within the etheric body.

### **3rd Orisha-Oshun (Solar Plexus):**

The third orisha is Oshun which governs the solar-plexus/ or navel center. In the Yoruba context, Oshun symbolizes clarity and flowing motion. This center is a common site of energy

blockages and disease. Through this orisha in the astral and etheric bodies, we find that humanity is conditioned by the arousal of the life-force "Aganyu" through joy, pleasure, and desire, be it good, bad, selfish, or spiritual. This orisha is the vast clearing house for overindulges/ passions, wastefulness, craving for drugs, alcohol, carelessness, and narcissistic behavior.

From an emotional and spiritual perspective, this orisha is linked to the issue of personal power. We think of personal power as having some control over one's life. This includes how people view themselves in relation to others such as employers, spouses, friends, and family. The inner feeling of powerlessness and a sense of a lack of control in one's life directly affects the energy flow through Oshun.

Oshun is also a seat of anger, aggression, and other emotions. As the function Of Oshun is rooted in the animal spirit, it is directly in control of physical phenomena, especially the influences of instincts, emotions, and sensuous energies. These emotions are often connected to an individual's sense of personal power and the issues of how much control they have over their lives. Needless to say, this causes stress to

manifest in the form of energy blockages in this center.

Its physical counterpart is the pancreas. This gland secretes pancreatic juice, the enzymes of which help with the digestion of proteins, carbohydrates and fats. This center also governs the stomach, liver, gall bladder, spleen, adrenal glands, lumbar vertebrae, and the digestive system. The orisha Oshun supplies nutritive subtle energy to all of the major organs involved in digestion and purification. In the majority of people, it is found to be "over-stimulated", resulting in nervous disorders, stomach, gall bladder and liver diseases. Dysfunction of Oshun is one of the most often causes of cancer. Certain reactions between this center and the heart orisha causes congestion of the solar-plexus center. This has a profound effect upon the bloodstream and brings about a proliferation of tissue, creating growths and tumors of a malignant nature.

The role of Oshun is to supply "vital energy" to all the orishas in the human energy system as well as the etheric body. It must be understood that the seven major orishas appeared during the course of the human's early evolution as a response to the impact of the seven major

streams of energy that are said to have formed on the African continent. According to Yoruba healing principles, Oshun is the source of power that determines the bio-chemical make up of the individual. The health of the African body type depends on this fact.

Vitality and nutrition is closely linked to the correct functioning of African physiology. Some of the most frequent diseases we hear from African people worldwide is colon cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, heart disease, sickle cell anemia, and hypertension. African nutritional science suggests that if people eat the foods that match their unique energy/ bio-chemistry, this will do much to improve their vitality, thus enhancing their ability to throw off disease. The word "Vitamin" is a term which broadly translated means "vital to life". The Vital force is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the physical – etheric body. Yoruba healing traditions teaches that the human body has a vital force (energy to mutate, electromagnetic field, or aura) that allows the body to transmute one vitamin into another type of vitamin. Its presence in correct proportions is essential to health, and it is for this reason that African people must give it careful consideration when

choosing their diet.

There are different types of vital force, but our main concern is with that vital force which emanates from the sun. The sun radiates vital energy throughout our entire solar system, and is assimilated by all life forms, be they planetary, human, animal, or plants. Each life form absorbs this vital energy, circulate it, and keeps what is required to maintain its integrity.

In the human body, this vital energy is distributed through the orisha oshun (by way of the spleen) to all of the other major orishas, and from there, sent to the organic systems of the physical body. The plant and animal kingdoms function in a similar fashion, so that an interchange of energies occur between man and plants, using the etheric web as a medium for exchange. For example, when plant food is ingested into the human body, the vital energy from the plant is discharged and blends with the vital energy of the human energy field, thus increasing vitality and health to the physical form.

Modern health science now recognizes that vitamins are an essential factor to the physiological processes of the body, and that a complete lack of a single vitamin in the diet, like

vitamin C, or one of the B complex vitamins, can eventually result in cancer and death. African nutritional health science now tells us that people of African descent require the vitamin "nitriloside" in their everyday diet in order to maintain integrity of their unique biochemistry. Today, however, with an increasing array of de-vitalized foods on the market, many of which are saturated with preservatives and other toxic additives that have an insidious effect in undermining the health of African people, the role of African nutritional food factors in supplementing the diet needs careful consideration on the part of Africans living in Western societies (For more on this vitamin, see chapter on The Science of African Biochemistry).

Another widespread disease that is associated with the imbalance of Oshun is diabetes. The energetic aspects of diabetes is not addressed by conventional Western medicine, even though it is important in the process of this disease. Over-stimulation of this orisha is also connected with many kinds of skin eruptions, and leads to acne, eczema, discoloration, and ashy skin.

## **2nd Orisha-Yemoja (reproductive**

**region):**

The second orisha is located at the base of the lumbar spine. In esoteric traditions, it has been referred to as the "sacral" chakra. Yemoja is the seat of sexuality and the entire reproductive system. Yoruba priests, often associate this orisha with the expression of sensual emotion and sex energy. The type and intensity of the energy flowing through this center will determine the degree of emotional and sexual energy in a person's life. This energy can go in two directions, either negative or positive. In the mystical tradition of the "Black Dalilias" of India, the sex energy provided the means to raise the "kundalini" life force, bringing forth Divine Consciousness in the human mind. This is the basis of the "Tantric Yoga" system of meditation, and is practiced while engaged in sex. It was believed by the ancient Africans that our sex energy is an expression of the universal creative power of nature and God. Used correctly, it helps to achieve our spiritual and material goals in life.

However, if this orisha is over-stimulated, it can have detrimental effects resulting in physiologic and psychological imbalances. For example, the positive emotional traits can be

caring, benevolence, sweet manners, realization of the true Self, and caring for others to the highest levels of spirituality. On the other hand, the negative emotional traits are neglectfulness, indolence, uncaring, fearfulness, discontent, alcoholism, and the undermining of one's spiritual development.

The physical correspondences associated with Yemoja relate to the hormonal function of the leydig cells with in the testes and ovaries. The leydig cells produce the hormone "testosterone", which is connected with libido and sexual drive in both males and females. From the Yoruba perspective, this energy center is the domain of "Yemoja", the Mother of nurturing Waters. This has an obvious connection to the gonads and the urinary tract. During a sexual climax, there is also the release of bodily fluids. At the energetic level, Yemoja represents cold and moist energy of the moon, and is the basis of the well being of the reproductive organs, urinary bladder, large and small intestines, and appendix (which are important sites of water absorption).

When there are blockages or other types of imbalances within this orisha, will produce diseases such as colitis, irritable bowel

syndromes, bladder tumors, malabsorption diseases of the small intestine, dysfunction of the sex organs such as infertility, menstrual problems, prostatitis, anemia, edema, and low back pains. Although diseases found in the reproductive system are normally applied to Yemoja, at times it becomes necessary to treat "Obatala" (throat) instead. This will stimulate the action of "Obatala", in such a way as to draw the energies up from Yemoja, thus allowing these orishas to restore a balance in the body.

#### **1st Orisha-Shango (Anal region):**

The first Orisha-Shango is known as the base, or root Orisha. This is a vitally important orisha which is situated at the apex of the sacrum. Thousands of years of ago, the Yoruba healers observed that Shango was responsible for anchoring the body on the earth plane. The amount of energy flow through Shango is a reflection of one's ability to link with Earth and to function in the natural world. At the symbolic level, Shango represents the earth element, and is reflected in the dense or lower vibrational nature of our being. In other words, Shango is linked to the basic survival instincts, responsible for readying the body for "fight or flight" in times of stress, thus preserving the physical

organism from injury.

In fact, this connection with the fight-or-flight response is linked to the adrenal glands (the medulla and cortex) which produces the hormone known as adrenaline. There is a reason the Yorubas refer to Shango as the "Protector/Warrior". This center is partly responsible for the mental energy called "the will to live". Over-stimulated, this orisha can cause defensiveness and motivate the individual to operate from a "jungle-mentality" which can be detrimental to health.

In the Yoruba context, Shango is the orisha that animates the substance or cellular matrix of the physical body, feeding and directing the life principle. This "life principle" is what is called the "Aganyu", the life force. Within its movement, lie the beginnings of all physical and chemical action, and of all cosmic and spiritual phenomena; it vitalizes and disorganizes; and from its point gradually emerged into energy and matter. Through its tendency to free itself from its entanglement and return to the central source (Ori), produced motion in the particles, and from its motion our bodies are formed. It is symbolized as a coiled serpent within the base of the spine. The Aganyu represents a powerful

dormant energy which when correctly awakened and controlled in full consciousness, progress up the spine in a spiral pattern, similar to intertwined snakes. In modern biology, this same pattern is also seen in the "double helix" configuration of the DNA molecule, which contains the code of life.

The teachers of Yoruba medicine, tell us that the Aganyu is a creative force of manifestation which assists us in the alignment of our orishas, the release of stored stress from the bodily centers, and the lifting of consciousness into higher spiritual stages. The process of awakening may be carried out through proper meditation which forces the Aganyu upwards through the appropriate spinal pathways and activate each of the major orishas during its ascent to the "Ori" (crown).

From the physical level, Shango is associated with the spine in general, and the orifices of excretion such as the rectum, the anus, and the urethra. Any dysfunction of this center can result in hemorrhoids, urethral strictures, and colon cancer. There is a close relationship between yemoja (sacral) and Shango (anus). As Yemoja represents the organs that govern the processes of absorption,

assimilation, and retention. Shango, on the other hand, represent release of 'previously digested materials. These orishas must work in harmony for the body to maintain a state of equilibrium. For example, if there is too much waste in the colon from constipation, there can be a buildup of toxicity within the body. Therefore, these orishas need adequate vital flow in order to maintain proper health.

## Healing the Orishas with Ota (gems) Stone Medicines

G

ems or crystals have been used by Yoruba healers for thousands of years to treat a variety of diseases. The use of healing gems date back to King Oduduwa (2000-500 B.C.) and have been used by Yoruba medicine men to this day. Gems were used energetically to stimulate both mental and spiritual energies in the human body. They were also worn on garments, fingers, used in religious ceremonies, and placed over the orisha energy points.

Gems are crystalized plants and possess the fossilized energies of the plant. They can transmit energies and receive energies. In fact, gem crystals can be programmed like the floppy disk in a computer disk drive. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, the liquid of an herbal tea can be poured over the gem and this will cause the gemstone to

retain the power of that herb. Furthermore, the gems can be

Furthermore, the gems can be programmed with the energy of colors, metals, minerals, oils, or the sound of musical notes. The gems themselves have special energy properties which have healing effects on the orisha internal and the subtle energy bodies. Gems are natural purifiers of vibrational energies because they absorb negative energies and transmit only those vibrations of a positive nature. They can be used to remove pain, elevate one's vibration, open blockages, help balance emotions, correct disharmonious energies, release negative forces, and heal through one's dreams

An interesting relationship which can be made on the basis of this science is the fact that the human body, to some extent, is a living crystal. The crystalline properties in the human body such as cell salts, lymph's, and white cells, have the same quartz like properties as crystals. When one uses natural gems to heal the body, a resonate frequency occurs between the cellular

crystal systems in the body and the frequency of the crystal. During this process, the gem crystal energy is amplified and directed to the part of the subtle anatomy which requires

energetic reorganization and healing. It is also possible to rebalance abnormally functioning orisha internals by placing the gem over the particular energy center region and energy is sent through the gem. This method is further enhanced with the use of sound and chanting. For instance, while the gemstone is over the 4th orisha, he or she can chant "Ogun".

Many times a particular pain or dis-ease stems from a "negative thought force" carried within the mental body of the individual. This negative force is the energy manifestation of some type of demonic spirit which has formed in the individual for a long period of time. Most thought forces are charged with a particular emotion. The gemstones may be used to disintegrate a Negative spirit in a person's mental energy field. I have found this technique very effective in my practice. Aspect is expressed through the inner geometric pattern that makes up the gem. All crystals are composed of electrons, atoms, and molecules which usually settle into a crystalline pattern, forming grid-work systems that are very complex. This process involves the divine symmetries guided by universal forces. All minerals, including gems and stones have their own unique expressions of the divine energies of the Creator's

Consciousness. There is consciousness in all levels of matter, from the human level on down to the quantum level. Conversely, through the divine subtle energies of the gemstones, we are able to transmute and transform human consciousness.

Yoruba priests consider gemstones to belong to the divine order of male (positive) and female (negative) energy polarities. Scientific investigations of the bi-polar energies of precious stones show that the diamond, the garnet, and the amethyst have negative energies (E-), while the sapphire, coral, and emerald have positive energies (E+). The gemstones are arranged according to what we may call the "Spirit Polarities" of the orishas. Every unique gem in nature produces either a magnetic force (female), or electric force (male). The balance of these energy fields in matter produces "Di-electric energy". Di-electric energy is "spirit". This is the key to using the gemstones to broadcast the specific orisha frequency to the patient using the gem as a waveguide. In other words, the orisha energies take place between the two polarities to manipulate and direct force in the human spirit. More will be said on this subject in volume 3 of African Medicine.

Before dealing with the gem healing chart, a word or two about the preparation of these gemstones. Before the gems can be used to make Spiritual medicines, they first must be cleansed of old vibrational energies. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. First purchase small, good quality gems. One of the fastest methods of cleansing a gemstone is by placing it in a bowl of distilled water that contains several drops of "Pennyroyal" flower essence. This procedure takes only a few minutes. You are now ready to prepare "spirit medicines". Place each gem in a glass vial containing a diluted alcohol solution. This is stood in darkness for a week, allowing the vibrational frequencies of the gems to permeate the solution. At the end of the week, remove the gem and wash it in water. It is then dried and placed in storage for future use.

Sugar pilules, or pills are then introduced into the solution and the vial rotated upwards and downwards gently until the pills are well absorbed with the vibrational frequency of the solution. They are then removed and dried on white paper, and stored in appropriately marked glass containers. These medicines can then be taken orally as indicated by the gem chart. The solutions may also be mixed to form

combination remedies of several gemstones. When the gems are used in this fashion, it emulates a multi-dimensional energy field which is able to charge several energy centers in a single powerful burst.

The following gem healing chart can be used as a directive to treat the orisha internals energetically with gem tinctures. By ingesting a gem tincture, the energy imprint of a particular stone is transferred directly to the individual's energy bodies and orisha internals. The gems may be useful for rebalancing and cleansing "blocked" orishas. The gems listed are simply a guide. The aspirant must keep in mind that there are no hard and fast rules in the use of the gems. In the realm of personal healing, gem therapy is an excellent tool to assist the aspirant in rebalancing the orisha internals. (refer to Table 4).

**Table 4**

Afflictions of the Orishas: Ota (gems) Stone Healing Principles			
Orisha	Physiological process	Disease Manifestations	Gem treatment
Ori	brain, bones, white fluids of the body, pituitary	tumors, insanity, nervous disorders	sapphire diamond
		sinus problems,	

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Orunmila	Pineal gland, spinal cord, eyes, ears, nose	catarrh, hayfever, cataracts, endocrine imbalance headache, migraines	emerald
Obatala	thyroid, parathyroid, mouth, vocal cords, lungs, cervical vertebrae, alimentary canal	asthma, TB, bronchitis, emphysema, sinus, catarrh, syphilis	moonstone coral emerald
Ogun	thymus gland, adrenal glands, blood, tendons, sinews, circulatory system, heart	circulatory problems, vagus nerves, autonomic nervous system, HIV, AIDS, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, autoimmune reactions, childhood diabetes	ruby, emerald amethyst
Oshun	digestive organs, stomach, pancreas, liver, gall bladder, spleen, adrenal glands	ulcers, diabetes, cancer, liver, stomach, and gall bladder disorders, skin disorders	coral, onyx
Yemoja	gonads, reproductive organs, leydig cells, testes, ovaries, bladder, large and small intestines, appendix, prostate	syphilis, colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, bladder tumors, low back pain, sexual dysfunction, prostatitis, bladder cancer	cat's eye pearl moonstone sapphire
Shango	sacrum, spine, rectum, anus, urethra, adrenals, DNA pattern	kidney problems, spinal problems, low back pain, constipation, diarrhea, stress, inherited diseases	emerald coral moonstone bloodstone

## **The Mystery of Orunmila and the Foundation of the Ifa Corpus Oracle System**

T

he foundation of the Yoruba wisdom system is an oracle called the Ifa Corpus (Cosmic Intelligence). The Ifa Corpus is based on binary mathematical principles, which are the basis of computers and modern technology. The Ifa oracle is composed of the combined influences of 77 ( $7 + 7 = 14$ ) primary archetypes, which are the shaping forces of all elements and events in the world. These archetypes or Orishas represent the 14 chakras which make up the human subtle bodies.

The Ifa oracle system also corresponds to the Tree of Life, a device used for medical diagnosis, evaluating mental and spiritual functions, and communicating with spiritual agencies. Yoruba practitioners will immediately recognize the connection to Orunmila, which is

the main figure of the Yoruba oracle system. In this respect, Orunmila is called the "Prophet of vision and divination. It is Orunmila that guides us to the lifestyle and actions that enable us to maintain the equilibrium and processes of the Life Force (Aganyu). We must note that all divine oracles were received by prophets and sages after receiving Divine enlightenment. In China, the oracle system is called the I Ching, in ancient Egypt, the Metu Neter, in Judaism the kabbalah, and in Islam, the Holy Quran.

The Ifa Corpus is an ancient and powerful form of information retrieval and inner consultation system that can be adapted by anyone for the use of advise and healing. According to Yoruba wisdom, all elements of the environment are alive and all have their source of power in the spirit world. Rocks (ota), plants (ewe), animals, clouds, and Wind are charged with Life and must be paid due respect for the maintenance of harmony and health. Our job is to understand this balance and to live in harmony with it, always taking nature into consideration in every endeavor. The matrix of energy in nature is the life giver and its source is the Creator.

The four principal specialties of the Ifa oracle system are:

- 1) Healing
- 2) Accessing new or lost knowledge
- 3) Developing power
- 4) Prophesying or foretelling.

Although most Yoruba priests have a knowledge of all these areas, they also tend to focus on one specialty in order to master it. For example, Oloogun's or Yoruba herbalists specialize in learning about the power of medicinal plants and herbs for the healing of disease. Other priests, or priestess develop the ability to forecast events, locate good opportunities, and warn of potential dangers. Still Others become power brokers, religious counselors, or travelers of space and time. Whatever their area of specialty, they are the medicine men and women of their communities. The Yoruba priest is visionary, seer, and healer.

### **The Life Force and The Tree of Life**

The Tree of Life is the supreme organizing principle in healing. It is the place where Yoruba

healers find much survival information and knowledge relating to the cure of diseases and infirmities. It is also known as the storehouse of the Life Force (Aganyu), and the seven major Orishas. It is important to realize that our physiological functions do not originate in our physical organs, but in the life force. Shango is in charge of directing all of our physiological and spiritual functions. In this respect, Shango is the divine faculty that is in charge of the life force energy. Shango also enables us to direct, protect, and develop the full potential of our Life Force. A strong life force is acquired through proper diet, adequate exercise and the avoidance of sensual excesses, which leads to balanced health. All of the Orishas are connected to each other via passage ways that move up and down the spine. These channels allow the various openings to work in harmony and to remain in communication with one another. Occasionally these channels' or Orishas become blocked, or shut down due to trauma, accident, poor diet, fear, or spiritual and mental illness. A Yoruba healer's explanation might be that the person has become imbalanced due to interference by ajogun (negative energy) or weakness of the guardian Orisha who assists with that area.

Each Orisha or channel has its own quality and frequency of energy that governs specific networks of the body and energizes particular functions of consciousness. For example, the fifth Orisha (Obatala) relates to self-expression (vocal cords), while the second Orisha (Yemoja) governs the reproductive system. Therefore, if you have a particular physical or energetic problem, knowing which Orisha to focus on could be quite useful and direct you to the appropriate healing therapy.

Another tool that Yoruba priests use to contact or heal the various Orishas in the human spirit is through ritual dance ceremony. The ancient Yoruba possessed knowledge of the inner Life Force and practiced dancing and drumming to arouse it for the purpose of attaining spiritual evolution and healing. In the African healing system, dance is an important part of healing various diseases. Dance movements invite the presence of particular spirits, or Orishas. The dance itself heats up a spiritual power within the dancer, allowing him or her to enter an altered state of consciousness and receive healing. Dance is also a powerful means of prayer, both to the Supreme Being and to the ancestors. All over Africa, and parts of the Caribbean, dance and drumming rituals are

highly choreographed performances.

Participants in the dance ritual move in a circle to the sound of drum beats. From the Yoruba perspective, the circle represents the relationship between the inner and outer worlds. In fact, the entire energy matrix that holds the spirit world and the material world in a state of balance consists of a circular sphere Yoruba healers call the Orita Meta. According to Yoruba wisdom, the cycles of nature and nature's tendency is towards wholeness or roundness. Tree trunks, plant stems, the spinal column, bodily organs, the sun, the moon, the stars, galaxies, tornados, whirlwinds, shells, and pine cones are examples of natural circular forms in nature.

It is not by chance that the circular dance ritual Yoruba priests use to contact the Orisha world is round and the drums they use to help them communicate with them are round as well. To focus the right energy, Yoruba priests use rapid rhythmic drumming that drives them on their inner journey. The drum is a tuning device used as a means to open the channel to the spirit world.

This method of accessing the Orisha plays an essential role in raising the life force energy.

Here at the base of the spine, is located the archetypal energy of Shango that lies latent until tapped by Yoruba rituals. This Orisha is also known as the ancestral power that, if released, rises up the spine, activating all the Orishas before opening the "Third Eye of Orunmila". In the Yoruba Cosmology this latent energy is known as Oshumare, or serpent power. It represents dormant (coiled up as a serpent) and uncontrolled sexual energy. Our task is to convert this sexual energy into spiritual energy, thereby achieving expanded consciousness, thus becoming one with the universe: OLUDUMARE. You will notice that the word "Oludumare" (GOD) is expressed in the serpent energy "Oshumare" (SNAKE). The old Yoruba people adhered to a cosmogony and mythology which closely follows the Egyptian systems. For example, the Yoruba viewed the snake biting its own tail as a symbol of creator and sustainer of creation. Through its 3,500 "coils" above earth, and 3,500 "coils" below the earth, the snake represents roundness, a circle, the orb, the earth; perpetual motion, cycles, stages, and periods. She has the power of change, transformation, going up and down, confronting and at the same time uniting the opposites, because she comprises both masculine and

feminine attributes. It should be stressed, however, to prevent any misunderstanding, that the Yoruba never worshiped the snake by itself.

The same symbol has also been adopted by medicine in other cultures. The ancient Egyptians represented medicine by the caduceus with two intertwined snakes ending in a pair of wings from the earth to the sky. The Hindu speak about twin snakes which they call "Kundalini", meaning an energy which rises and energizes the seven energy centers called Chakras. The snake lies asleep in the 1st Chakra, located at the base of the spinal cord, but even in that state, gives vital energy to the individual.

According to Yoruba medicine, this serpent power can be activated by certain dance movements of the Orishas. This serpent energy stored in the base of the spine, can be released with the pelvic dance movements of Shango. The energy travels up the spinal column to the pineal gland, where Cosmic Intelligence and physical healing can occur. This is the "Eye of Orunmila", the light of intuitive vision. It is the level of intuitive wisdom that does not require thinking or the mind processes. Herein lies the ability to perceive the spirit as well as matter, and to communicate with the Orisha world.

In the following chapter you will learn the process of communicating with your Orisha spirit through song, dance, movement, and rhythms. Anyone can practice these techniques and derive health and extra stamina.

## **Secrets of the Orisha Healing Dance Ritual**

### **W**

hen Yoruba practitioners want to manifest the healing power of the Orishas, they do so through ceremony, ritual, dance movements, prayers, herbs, gem stones, sounds, songs, words, gestures, fragrances, music, color, the seven directions, circles, and so on, and are able to produce high vibrations which are beyond common experience. The mind, body, and spirit is employed in the ritual in order to enrich the experience and to raise the Life Force energy to shift, transform, and heal.

One of the most important rituals and spiritual practices of the Yoruba system of healing is the "Orisha Healing Dance". The Orisha Healing Dance is characterized by the ingredients listed below:

- Invoking the power of sound such as drumming,

singing, and chanting to the Orishas.

- Invoking the power of motion such as hand and body movement, and dances characteristic to each Orisha.
- Invoking the power of space by performing the dance ritual in a circle.
- Invoking the power of smell by burning incense, oil, and herbs.
- Invoking the power of color by wearing certain colors to attract the Orisha spirits.
- Invoking the power of the Orishas by inviting their presence, participation, and assistance in healing and curing of spiritual and physical diseases.
- Invoking the power of all those physically present at the ceremony by requesting their prayers, and group focus of

attention.

In the performance of the healing ritual, several ingredients are brought together and used in conjunction with one another. This activity mostly occurs within the context of a party. At these parties called a "bombe", or "Fiesta", people gather to participate in drumming, dancing, and chanting. The members of the house, dance in a circle called a "rode, or "roda", and the members wear various colors to help attract the Orishas. First, the room where the ritual will be performed is cleansed of any negative energies by burning cedar, sage, or sweet basil. The priest, or priestess will begin the ceremony by making an offering to the Orishas of medicine. The seven directions are also used in conjunction with the invocation of the Orishas, their central location of importance in the Cosmos.

Most of the words, dance movements, sounds, rhythms, sacrifices, preparation of herbs, and baths produced in Yoruba rituals contribute to increasing the energy field of the shadow/matter of the spirit world. In trying to understand the reality behind the rituals, we have to recall that for the African-Yoruba worldview, everything in the universe shares a

psychic energy field (quantum physics connection), which is the psychotic property of every particle or wave function in nature. They also believe in the existence of shadow-matter, quantum energy, plants, animals, stones, waters,aa planets, suns, stars, and galaxies, This aspect of their vision of the universe is what constitutes Yoruba Cosmology (Aje Chagullia). Their beliefs should not be confused with the concept of paganism, by which they worship trees, or rocks, and inanimate objects. The Yoruba worldview sees everything as part of a grand unified field.

In the healing ritual I will described below, I suggest you use a drum and a bell, the ancient tools of the Babaluaye (Yoruba doctor). The drum has been used since ancient history and is employed by shamans on every continent of the world. The drum aids in opening the doorway to the spirit world, and to help call forth the aid of the Orishas. The rhythmic drumming also helps to drive the dancing and helps you focus. Creating a focus with the drum helps induce urgent body movements that will heat up the body and awaken the root Chakra (Shango). The drum energy can contact the Orisha Internals and send energy into the environment, or distribute healing energy within a sick person's

body.

The sounds and beats of the drum creates a "bio-acoustic frequency" that helps invoke an altered state of consciousness. The power of the drum beats and rhythms in inducing the trance state cannot be ignored. The drum beats elicit a high vibratory state that can lead to increased vibratory states at all levels - atomic, subatomic, molecular, and energetic, including the four forces of nature (gravity, electromagnetism, strong force, and weak force). Through the rapid rhythmic drumming, the priest can modulate and "penetrate the cracks of time and space".

The drum is more than rhythm, tempo, and cadence. It is a transportation device. It carries the adepts into the world of the spirits. According to physicist Michael Harner, the monotonous beats coming in a frequency of four to seven per second can break the ambiguity barrier and open the doorway to the alternate reality. It happens that the "sonic driving" is approximately in the same frequency range as that of the brain's theta waves (Harner 50). A person can enter a trance state and begin channeling the Orishas at any time, whenever the Orisha wants to come. Within the devotee, the Orisha is incarnated, representing a tiny

particle of the energy belonging to the guardian angel. That is to say, this energy possesses the body and is expressed through it.

During the healing ritual Yoruba practitioners also use the "Adja", a metal cone shaped bell, with a small handle. It is used along with the drum and serve as a guide when the Orishas are in a trance, making it easier. Bells are also used as a kind of directing device. The sound of the bell creates a high-pitched frequency that helps invoke the Orisha Internals. Vibrational energy can be sent out into the environment. The combination of the drum and bell in healing ceremonies have proven effective tools for setting the stage and opening the gateway to the spirit world.

### **Opening Ritual For The Orisha Healing Dance**

Set up a private place, or room where you will perform your ritual and not be interrupted for at least 30 minutes. Clear out an area where you or your group can move in a circle without bumping into things. The room should be semi-dark. Cleanse the room with ceder, or sage first, to help clear negative energies in the environment.

Stand in the center of the circle, facing

northeast, and invoke the help of Elegba (Gate keeper of the seven spiritual pathways). You can say something very simple like, "Elegba, Orisha of the crossroads, transform my house into a place of healing energy. By cleaning your energy, you help me clean my energy. And do not allow negative spirits to interfere in our ritual. Let my Healing ritual be successful. Thank you for your great honor and protection." In the Yoruba tradition, Elegba is the Orisha who first receives offerings, usually sweets, tobacco, and coconut. Petitions to Elegba are generally for any kind of opening.

Stand in the center of the circle, facing east, and invoke the healing power of Osain (Orisha of botany), or Erinle (Orisha of medicine). You can say something very simple like, "Osain, Spirit of the Plant world, please bring your healing power and energy to our gathering. Thank you for your Blessings." At this point many Yoruba devotees make their offering, or sacrifices (edu) to the Orishas. It may consist of food (onje), or herbs (ewe), and in some cases an herbal solution mixed with blood (edu). However, this is optional.

Moving Counter-clockwise, face the direction of the Orisha you wish to invoke for

healing during the ritual. For example, if you want to invoke the power of Oshun, face southwest, and say something like, "o, Mother Oshun, Spirit of fresh water and rivers, give me your ashe, give me your strength, give me your healing power, which I shall know how to use. Thank you for your healing Water."

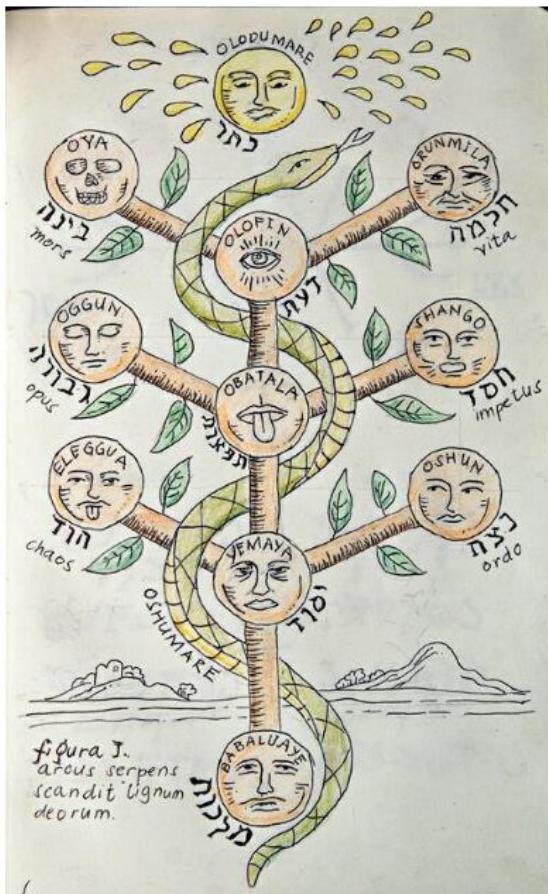
If you are in a group, it is often effective to ask the participants to help request the healing presence of the Orishas. Yet, participants in the ritual can also choose the Orisha and direction that means the most to them at this time. For example, someone may need the healing power of Ogun, related to the north; a person might need the healing power of Yemoja, related to the east; another person may require the help of Shango, which is related to the west. Each stands facing into the middle of the circle from the direction that they have selected. They each can request healing from the heart to that Orisha.

## **Afa of the Ewes and the Spiritual Nature of the Orishas**

### F

rom the foregoing, we can see how the Orisha Healing Dance ritual serves as a means to treat sickness and disease using the spiritual power of the

### **AFA OF THE EWES (Yoruba Tree of Life) - The Ten Energy Spheres**



Orisha Internals. They can, thus, be contacted by the knowledge of each Orisha's energy, dance step, spiritual direction, herbs, foods, oils, color, and day of the week. The following Tree of Life (Afa of the Ewes) category

serves as a measuring rod, a guide, if you will, for invoking each Orisha during your ritual. What the periodic table of elements does for the science of chemistry, the Yoruba Tree of Life makes possible the creation of a science of medical diagnosis and treatment.

### OBATALA

Sphere: 1st

Elements: Air, earth, and water Day: all

Colors: white Numbers: 8, 24

Ota stones: Diamonds, sapphire

Esoteric Herbs: Basil, white roses, cotton (leaves), marjoram, sage, fennel. Oils: Basil, lotus, fennel, tuberose, sage, marjoram

Incense: Myrrh, southernwood. Spiritual direction: None

Personality Complex: Beyond the influence of emotions. The origin of wisdom. Yoruba Therapeutics: The healing power of meditation and sound mantras. Spirit strengthening herbs, nervines, and anti-spasmodics.

Physiology: Pituitary gland.

Dance movements: Obatala does not like to dance, he sits down. But in trance, he is more mobilized. He walks as an old man, bending

forward and trembling.

### **ORUNMILA**

Sphere: 2nd

Elements: Air (Outer space), water, earth, fire

Day: Thursday

Colors: Blue and White Numbers: 8

Ota stones: Yellow sapphire, lapis lazuli, emerald

Esoteric Herbs: Thuja Oils: Lotus, sweet almond Incense: from the oils

Spiritual direction: South East

Personality Complex: Sage, insight into things, prophet. Orunmila is the Orisha of divination and spiritual counsel, and provides advice and guidelines for living.

Yoruba Therapeutics: Spiritual disciplines which open the Pineal gland (third eye). Herbs which treat the Liver/Gall bladder system, Damp disease patterns - use of herbs that clear heat, and disperse dampness (ginseng, Pinellia, ginger, licorice, Jujube).

Physiology: Pineal gland. Dance movements: none

### **OGUN**

Sphere: 5th Element: Earth

Day: Tuesday

Colors: blood red, purple, green, black

Numbers: 3

Ota stones: red coral, garnet, ruby, amethyst, emerald

Esoteric Herbs: Rompe Saraguey, Holly (Quita maldicion), pine, Vencedor, Tobacco

Oils: Pine, cedarwood

Incense: Pine, tobacco, cedarwood Spiritual direction: North

Personality Complex: Courage, energetic, forceful, enterprising,

muscular, zealous, passionate, fighting spirit, great herbalist, triumphs and prevails over matter.

Yoruba Therapeutics: Medicines in charge of the immune system, the voluntary musculature system, elimination of toxins through the skin, perspiration, sexual excitement. Tonics, Stimulants, aphrodisiacs, detoxing herbs, and heat draining herbs.

Physiology: Heart/Cardiovascular system, Kidney/Adrenal glands, tendons, and sinews.

System; Blood and vital energy disease patterns.

Dance movements: Oshun, the Orisha of water and seduction, moves languorously (weak and lethargic) as though flowing through water, with hand and arms moving in wavey motions.

### ELEGBA

Sphere: 8th Element: Earth

Day: Monday, Wednesday

Colors: Red and black, white and black

Numbers: 1, 3, 21

Ota stones: Emerald

Esoteric herbs: Oregano, Lavender, larkspur, Abre Camino, Arrasa con todo.

Oils: Lavender, lily of the valley.

Incense: same as oils. Spiritual direction: North East

Personality Complex: trickster, sharp and witty, loquacious, diplomatic, communicative, cold and pedantic, cunning, protector. Elegba is necessary for the manipulation of physical phenomena.

Yoruba Therapeutics: Nervines, emollients. Medicines which act on the functions of the motor and sensory nerves.

Physiology: Sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. The 12 Meridians, Lung/Large Intestine system, Libido sex energy.

Dance movements: Elegba is an erotic, and phallic energy, invoked in rituals of fertility. His movements are sexual gyrations of the hips with the arms out stretched towards the sky. He represents the innate reproductive energy of man.

### YEMOJA

Sphere: 9th Element: Water Day: Monday

Colors: Sea blue, crystal

Ota stones: Pearls, moonstone.

Esoteric herbs: Spearmint, lettuce, wild lettuce, purslane. Oils: Spearmint, jasmine.

Incense: same as oils.

Spiritual direction: East

Personality Complex: Motherliness, caring, benevolent, accommodating, sweet mannered, fearful, comfort loving, humble, nurturing, to be free of the cares and difficulties of life. Devotion to spiritual development.

Yoruba Therapeutics: Alterative, diuretic, and nutrient herbs and foods. Healing through

hydro-therapy (water).

Physiology: Female Reproductive system (ovaries, uterus), digestive, assimilation, Blood/Urological systems, Liver/Gallbladder system, and autonomous nervous systems.

Dance movements: Yemoja, Mother of Waters, appears to dance with a subtle bending of her arms, and upper body. She seems to be surrounded by sweet melodies springing from her own self. She dances before a mirror held by her right hand.

### OYA

**Sphere: 10th**

**Element: Air**

Day: all

Colors: Reddish-brown, Earth tones, light pink  
Numbers: 9, 7

Ota stones: Cat's Eye, Onyx, blue sapphire

Esoteric herbs: Royal Poinciana, Yucca, Cucaracha, jerusalem tea, bitter broom Oils: Myrrh, cypress

Incense: same as oils Spiritual direction: all

Personality Complex: Warrior spirit,

temperamental, untiring fighter, merriment, sensuality, courage, willpower, tenacity, quick thoughts, versatile character, can perform one task at a time.

Yoruba Therapeutics: Healing through words of power, refrigerant, hypnagogic, astringent, antipyretic, and expectorant herbs. Medicines used to treat Lung/Cold Disease Patterns - use warming (spleen, liver) herbs - (Ephedra decoction, Mullein, Comfrey, Cherrybark); Dryness Patterns - nourish blood (Slippery elm, Marshmallow root); for Phlegm Disease Patterns - (Horehound, Coltfoot flower, Mulberry leaves).

Physiology: Seat of the catabolic processes that govern aging, lungs, bronchial passages, mucous membranes, the nervous system, its filaments and nerve endings.

Dance movements: Oya, the Orisha of Wind, her steps and dancing are marked, triumphant, dashing, swift, and sparkling. Her head and hair moves in circular motions as flowing in the wind.

## **Songs to the Orisha Internals**

W

hile there are a great many traditional Orisha songs and chants that accompany Yoruba healing ceremonies, Yoruba priests usually have a repertoire of songs to call upon the Orisha internals. Typically, a song (or oriki) is used as a method of calling up healing power, or tapping into the internal spirit for divine guidance. The Orisha song may be long and elaborate, but more commonly it is a simple verse or series of sounds set to a rhythm or tune. It may be accompanied by simple drumming during the healing dance. Here is an example of a simple Oriki song to Oshun.

Iba Oshun Sekese

I respect the spirit of the river, spirit of mystery

Latojoku awede we mo

Who cleans me from inside out

Eni ide ki su omi a san rere

She who makes brass, uses water to bring good fortune

Oshun o pe o (3 times)

Spirit of the river I am calling

Oshun o pele o

Spirit of the river I am greeting you

Oshun Ro

Spirit of the river descend

Mbe mbe ma yeye, a dupe

Eternal mother I give thanksASE!

This power song is used to call forth the energy of Oshun, the seventh sphere of the Tree

of Life. In singing the Orisha songs, you call forth their powers to protect and help. The songs are also connected with the "personality complex". Singing an Orisha song helps to bring about the resources and energy of the Orisha internals. Remember that there are all kinds of songs to the Orishas. Therefore, you will want to purchase some of the various books on Orisha songs. For this, I advise that you get a copy of "Songs for Selected Heads" by John Mason (Yoruba Theological Archministry, 1992).

African spiritual concepts are based on the recognition that buried within the spirit of every person are intelligences that hold the "blueprint" for the correct expression of each personality complex. These personality complexes are aspects of the Supreme Being, which are called by many names, deities, angels, nafs, Orishas, etc. The Yorubas of Nigeria styled themselves as incarnations of a particular "Orisha". Songs to the Orisha are usually sung at ceremonial times, during African rites of passage, or in situations where assistance is wanted. For example, the Yoruba spiritual initiation system involved the expansion of the function of these personality complexes (Orishas). Thus, a young boy was initiated into Ogun through the process of trance in order to

awaken the powers within himself to bring forth the warrior nature of Ogun. Ogun corresponds to the faculty at the 5th sphere of the Tree of Life. Thus, when in battle, the young boy is able to bring forth Ogun at will, transferring the attributes of Ogun into his personality. Singing, or chanting an Orisha song before, or during a surgical procedure, or healing ritual stimulates your hidden resources and great guidance system.

## **Orisha Dance Movements**

### D

Dancing is an important aspect of Yoruba healing ceremonies and rituals. It is an excellent method of opening the gateway to the inner forces of nature. Movement through Orisha dance is both an expression and liberation of healing energy and a vehicle for trance state. It allows the dancer to shift from one state of consciousness to another very rapidly and promotes the expression of each personality complex (Orisha).

The Orisha dance movements transforms the atmosphere, including those watching the dance. Thus, they are part of the process and thus prepared for the communion with the spirit. In addition, the patterned movements of the dance create openings through which the Orisha Internals become accessible. Through the shifting movements of the dance, powerful energies are unleashed within the body. The

dynamic flow of the gestures releases the energy dams at all the joints. This is important because at the vertebrae are located the seven main Orisha energy centers. Dancing creates harmony, balance, and alignment within the body and helps to unblock the energy centers.

### Procedure for the Healing Dance Ceremony

1. Cleanse the room of negative energies.
2. Invoke the powers of the Orishas you want to heal.
3. Outline a circle approximately eight feet in diameter. This is optimal for one person, but you can make it bigger for more people.
4. Begin the drumming and ringing of the bell (or tape recording), in a methodical beat - two beats per second.
5. Begin your Orisha dance, moving in a counterclockwise circle. Continue to dance this way for as long as you like, but not for less than fifteen minutes or so.
6. Begin Singing the Orisha oriki

(song) you want to amplify for healing.

7. Dance until you experience a trance state, or receive instruction from your Orisha internal.
8. Allow the Orisha healing dance to climax and come to a natural conclusion. End the dance with three strong drum beats.
9. Thank the Creator and your Orisha for guidance and help.

## **The Union of Opposites**

### T

he Onion of Opposites is another unique principle applied in Yoruba healing arts. Through spiritual laws, which govern the existence of the Orisha divinities, they are attracted to and merge into each other by way of Erinle-Orisha (the Orisha of plants). Their relationship towards each other is best illustrated by the concept of positive and negative poles of an electric force. This duality is a principle of nature. Even the interior of the body has organs and chemicals that are made up of (+) and (-) charges.

From the mental aspect, to feel things demands the negative force. To express through things, to direct and manage them requires the positive force. One result of this activity is an unbalancing of the positive-negative powers by accentuating one or the other. Another result is the gradual weakening of the link between the

Orisha internals and the consciousness, which opens the way for demonic spirits.

The complementary duals tied to Oludumare, who represents the first or neutral force, is also the neutral force that is balanced and keeps the flux and flow of natural laws in check, as the Orisha divinities are forever changing. Conceptually, the Orishas are expressed as having either male (+), or female (-) attributes. A female Orisha becomes a complement to a male Orisha, the companion for the life force.

Orisha (+) Male	Oludumare (Neutral)	Orisha (-) Female
Hydrogen		Wind or Oxygen
Earth		Heaven
Dryness		Water
Fire and Heat		Coldness
Spring/Summer		Autumn/Winter
Exterior Solid organs		Interior
Joy		Hollow organs
Virtue		Sadness
Day		Vice

You will notice that the column under Oludumare has no listings, and there is a very good philosophical reason for this. Once Oludumare set these things in motion, they followed their own laws and Oludumare does not intervene. Therefore, the human condition is tied to these laws.

Oludumare also created male (+) and female (-) Orishas. Each has its counterpart and our internal, biochemical environment reflects the dual force of charges. Each pole and Orisha counterpart comprises a distinct but essential part of diagnosis and treatment. For example, Oya-Orisha (-) is usually in the company of her counterpart Shango-Orisha (+). Oya is the guardian of storms, and the Winds of Change, while Shango is the divinity of fire, and lightning. In nature, the storm is usually accompanied by lightning and electrical activity. The science of physics demonstrates that electrical storms are the result of the union of positive and negative charges in the atmosphere.

In herbal treatment, if we are treating a person who has a cough with hot phlegm or mucous for instance, we would prescribe plantain to cool the heat of Shango, and mullein

to calm the cough, or Wind of Oya. Further, applying the male/female complementary principle, we would employ herbs that affect, or counter-balance diseases brought about by causes of opposite qualities. For instance, disease brought on by dryness is counter-balanced by water; heat is countered by coldness; diseases brought on by exterior conditions are counter-balanced by interior; sadness is balanced by joy. In other words, whatever gender sign the disease is borne from, one must apply the opposite gender in order to bring about the equilibrium of the internal Orishas.

The "Union of opposites" creates harmony/balance in the universe. This is true in the case of musical sounds, such as we find in Yoruba drumming; where the harmony/balance produced is the result of the two fundamental tones, either high or low. This is also true in Natural Phenomena, which are identified with numbers, whose elements consist of the odd and even. The even is unlimited because of its quality of unlimited divisibility and the odd indicates limitation, while the product of both is the unit of harmony and balance. Similarly, we obtain harmony/balance in the union of Positive and Negative; Male and Female; Material and

Immaterial; Body and Soul.

## **Yoruba Diagnosis and Numerology**

T

he use of mystical numbers in Yoruba medicine has resulted in an important aspect of determining the relationships of the internal Orishas during the process of disease and demonic possession of the human body. A new dimension was added in this way to help the healer understand the many secrets and esoteric meaning associated with Orisha counterparts. It also gave him a tool for determining the divine harmony in which the Orisha internals exist.

Galileo stated that mathematics is the language in which God wrote the universe. This is now a demonstrated fact. The universe expresses itself naturally in the language of numbers. The force of gravity diminishes as the second power of distance, the planets move around the sun in ellipses, etc. Mathematics is thus a symbolic counterpart of the universe. It is

the science of quantity and space, of pattern and structure.

Our ancient African ancestors believed that numbers formed an integral part of the human body. This divine science is manifested in the fact that the human body contains 209 bones. The length of pregnancy for a full term fetus is considered to be 280 days or 40 weeks after fertilization. By the use of various numerical ratios and proportions one could determine the appropriate balance and harmony to bring the body back into health and well being.

Orisha number correspondence has been used since the time of the mystic prophet Orunmila. It is also used by Yoruba priests and is the basis of Orisha diagnosis and treatment. The Orisha number correspondence was (and is) used to understand Orisha interrelationships. There is a more complex system in present use other than the one presented in this essay, but we will not endeavor to go into that in this brief essay. I will therefore only briefly correlate and highlight some of the essential points so that I might give you an idea of how the numbers are used in diagnosis and treatment.

The Orisha internals are represented by

either odd, or even numbers, which tightly correlate with male (+) and female (-) counterparts that occur during disease. Of the seven major Orishas, Obatala and Shango represent the first and last Orishas respectively. Both are assigned even numbers because they represent the controlling Orisha channels in the body. All other Orishas are represented by odd numbers and are triggered by Obatala and Shango. Thus, by multiplying an odd number with an even number, one produces the various outcomes of harmony and balance, which corresponds to the counter parts of the Orisha internals. In this way, it is possible to determine which Orishas are involved in the misalignment.

By understanding how the divinities inside us relate, the Yoruba priest can tell which herbs, foods, prayers, and rituals should help you and which is no good or even cause harm. In Yoruba numerology, we have observed the following secrets about the Orisha divinities, and how the seven major Orishas combine:

	Obatala	$\frac{24}{(8, 8, \text{ or } 24)}$	=
--	---------	-------------------------------------	---

	Oshun	$\frac{(5)}{5}$	=
Messenger of the Orisha	Yemoja	$\frac{(7)}{7}$	=
Elegba (1) X	Ogun	$\frac{(3)}{3}$	=
	Oya	$\frac{(9)}{9}$	=
	Shango	$\frac{(6)}{6}$	=

Elegba, in Yoruba, is the Orisha who negotiates between the negative and positive forces in the body; therefore the numerical value of Elegba is one (1), which equally balances out the values of the other Orishas. In the physical sense, Elegba communicates through the sympathetic and para-sympathetic nervous system. It is up to Elegba-Orisha in us to reveal to us what forces are at play in the body.

Three-(3) and twenty-one (21) also represent Elegba- - Orisha. If we multiply the value of (3) with the other Orishas, we can determine which Orisha internals accompany each other in the body:

Elegba	Obatala	
1, 3, 21	3X	8,24
		= 24 =2 +4= 6
Oshun		
		5
Yemoja		
		7
Ogun		
		3
Oya		
		9
Shango		
		6, 12

As we can see, by multiplying the odd number (3) of Elegba with the even number (8) of Obatala, we get the resultant value of six (6), which is represented by Shango-Orisha. Their interrelationship involves the physiology of the bones. Where Obatala-Orisha is the creator of the human skeletal structure, and represents the color white (bones), and Shango-Orisha transforms bone marrow into red and white blood cells and is represented by the color red. Without the transforming power of Shango (fire) we cannot get the white purity of Obatala. Wherein the consuming fire of Shango brings

about the ashe of Elegba and changes our impure bodies into that which is pure and free of illness and human deformities.

Dozens of plants are used and capable of correcting an imbalance in the Obatala and Shango Orishas. Among those that are used by priests:

-Vervain(Obatala)

-Hyssop(Obatala)

-Nettles(Shango)

We may use the above herbs for treating a woman who has insufficient mother's milk. Here, we use vervain to treat the white fluids in the body, hyssop to tonify the mucus tissue of the breast, and nettles to help the nursing woman assimilate important minerals and vitamins crucial to the growth of a suckling baby.

According to Yorubic priests, Oya-Orisha is usually accompanied by her counter part Shango. The following calculation is used to deduce:

Shango Obatala= 288= 2+8+8 =18 =
6 1212 X8, 24 1+8= 9 = (Oya)
ShangoElegba

6,1212 X1, 3, 21= 36= 3+6 = (9 Oya)
Yemoja
7
Oshun
5
Shango12 XOgun
6, 12 3= 36= 3+6 = (9 Oya)
Oya
9

Based on the above calculation, we can deduce that Shango is usually in the presence of Oya Orisha during imbalance in the body. To correct the imbalance, we would treat both attributes at once.

Thus, the Yoruba numerical code, based on the seven major Orishas, can be helpful as a diagnostic tool in understanding how to treat the intricacies of the Orisha internals. However, what is presented to you so far is a small fraction of this indescribably vast, elaborate mathematical system, which extends to all types of symptoms and disease. Next we will discuss this remarkable system in relation to color diagnosis.

## Orisha Color Theory

### T

he theory so long held of three primary and four secondary colors is purely esoteric, for since the earliest periods it has been known by African medicine that there are seven (7), and not (3) primary colors. The human eye being capable of estimating only three of them. Thus, although green can be made combining blue and yellow, there is also a true or primary green which is not compound.

This is proven through breaking up the spectrum with a prism. Helmholtz, the German physicist, found that the so-called secondary colors of the spectrum could not be broken up into their supposed primary colors. Thus, the orange of the spectrum, if passed through a second prism, does not break up into a red and yellow, but remains orange.

According to Orisha color principles, there are seven primary colors each represented by

the various Orishas. (Refer to Table 9) Yoruba priests also use Orisha numerical codes to correspond with the colors that occur during Orisha dynamics. For instance:

By combining:

Yemoja +Oshun =Ogun
(blue)+(yellow)=(green)
(7)+ (5)= 12= 1+2 = 3

Thus, by combining Yemoja-Orisha represented by blue with Oshun-Orisha represented by the color yellow, we get the color green. By use of the Orisha numerical codes, we deduce the same outcome. For example, the sum of 7 and 5 in each Orisha, plus the sum of the single digit numbers equal 3, the value of Ogun-Orisha.

Consciousness, intelligence, and spiritual force are fittingly symbolized by the colors blue, yellow, and red. The therapeutic effects of the colors, moreover, are in harmony with this concept, for blue is a fine, soothing, electrical color; yellow, a vitalizing and refining color; and red, an agitating and heat-giving color. Yoruba priests have also demonstrated that minerals

and plants affect the human constitution according to their colors. Thus, a yellow flower generally yields a medicine that affects the constitution or Orisha in a manner similar to yellow light, or the musical tone "mi". An orange flower will influence in a manner similar to orange light, and being one of the so-called secondary colors, corresponds either to the tone "re". Or the cord of "do" and "mi". This is one of the reasons why certain beats are used during the Yoruba ritual dance.

The ancients conceived the spirit of man to correspond with the color blue, the mind yellow, and body with 'red. Heaven is therefore blue, earth yellow, and hell, or the underworld, red. In the Greek mysteries, the irrational sphere was always considered as red, for it represented that condition in which the consciousness is enslaved by the lust and passions of the lower nature. In India, certain attributes of the gods of Vishnu are usually depicted with blue skin to signify their divine and super-mundane constitution. According to esoteric philosophy, blue is the true and sacred color of the sun.

In Yorubic healing arts, colors are of great importance and their use is based on the spiritual energy characteristic to each Orisha

divinity. Further study of the important part which colors play in the symbols and rituals of Yoruba medicine is given by Afolabi Epega, in his book, "Obi: The Mystical Oracle of Obi Divination". Imole Oluwa Institute.

## **Sound in Yoruba Healing Arts**

### S

ound has a profound influence on the body and the nervous system. Certain sound frequencies increase our level of arousal and can change our body rhythms and our state of mind, and spirit.

Music has special power to affect consciousness. Yorubic priests recognize this power of music and use it in rituals designed to alter consciousness and speed up the healing processes in the Orisha internals. The Yoruba approach is rooted in thousands of years of African history and experience, and using the sound of rhythmic drumming has proven to rejuvenate the spirits, and enhance the healing powers of the herbs used by Yoruba priests. By using the right rhythms and beats, the Yorubic healer can leave the physical body, and journey to the Orisha spirit realm.

In Yorubic medicine, drumming is a highly developed art, capable of inducing dramatic changes in awareness, including trance, spirit possession, accelerated healing, and even complete loss of consciousness.

I have personally observed people who were suffering from serious illnesses be healed by these African drum rhythms during Yoruba dance sessions. The theory behind Yoruba drumming is that the body can be stimulated to rouse demonic forces that have possessed the body and thus frees the body of negative energies, which causes disease and sickness. The proof lies in its application. Many people of all backgrounds have experimented and participated in Yorubic dance sessions and have come away in a state of complete healing, and heightened awareness.

Yorubic drum ritual is a traditional technique used by experienced Yorubic healers after a complete diagnosis of the patient's condition. Alternatively, one can enroll in Yoruba African villages to participate in Yorubic religious ceremonies.

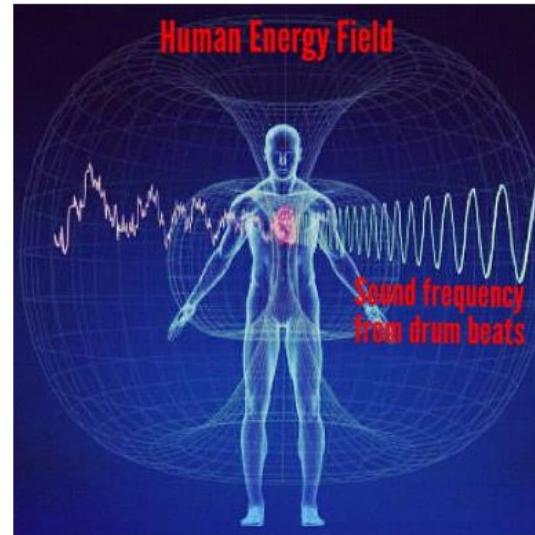
According to Yoruba healers (Oloogun in Yoruba), the expression of sacred music and trance connects us to each other, to our

ancestors, and to the powers and spirits of the universe. They recognized that music can touch the spiritual forces (Orishas) of the human body. For example, each orisha has its own musical rhythms and sounds. When called by drums, dance, and music, the various orisha's may take over the African healer and reveal valued information, and help him carry out effective medicinal healing on a patient, or on behalf of the whole community. The Yorubas of West Africa, like many tribes all over Africa, use music as a dynamic driving force, and is intricately woven into all their religious rites and ceremonies.

The Yoruba priest understands the healing effect of music, or sound on the human psyche and spirit and can individualize his music and tones to heal a particular person as is done by the drummers of West Africa. The healing of sickness is achieved by finding the person's inner sound mantra which is like a "bio-acoustic" sound frequency which is unique to each individual. African healers discovered that certain drum beats had healing effects on listeners, but only when the person heard their own unique note or frequency. It seems that the Yoruba priest is a master at finding the missing frequency from a person's energy field, or inner

balance. When this missing mantra, or sound frequency was restored to an individual's field by the playing of drums, various healing effects were created in the body. Among the Yorubas of West Africa, the healing ceremony is quite elaborate and complex and involves both men and women musicians. (See diagram 5).

**Diagram 5**  
**The -Acoustic Energy Field of the Human Body**



According to African medical science, we are an embodiment of cosmic vibrations. We make use of vibrations and produce them in others. Each of us have a dominant note, color, number, or vibration, and answer to that note by sound. Thus we all have a basic note, or frequency, a dominant one which sounds through all the movements and variations of the orisha internals and adds its power of tone to the harmony of the body. It has been referred to as a "bio-acoustic" sound frequency which is a physiognomy imposed by Nature. These various types of frequencies can be made to manifest under the 50 sound units, represented by the

drum beats which enter into the musical compositions of the African healer.

One unique case in which a Yoruba healer used this method of sound healing involved a woman who was severely afflicted with lead poisoning. The woman had been hospitalized and was put in a critical health unit, having suffered a number of strokes and failure of many of her major organs. Western Doctors considered the woman to be in grave condition. An African healer was allowed in the room, and within twenty minutes of being exposed to the healing sounds of drum beats, the woman's vital signs began to stabilize. Skeptical that the sound had had anything to do with the improved effect, the doctors told the healer to stop the drumming. The patient's condition reverted to critical within minutes. The healer then resumed the drumming, and again the patient stabilized. This went on for an hour, and the poison eventually excreted from the woman's body. Interestingly, the healer said the orisha Oshun assisted him in the process. Oshun is the orisha of the elimination and circulatory system, and was responsible for inducing the poison to leave the woman's body through the vagina and colon.

According to the Yoruba model, intricate musical tones were played to derive the frequency of a person's Orisha note. The Orisha note is the sound of a person's divine essence.

The Yoruba healer plays a complex blend of musical tones based on the various vibrational frequencies associated with the orisha internals and their associated physiological functions in the human body. Each of the musical notes played by the Yoruba healer corresponds to the 50 creative forces that are in charge of all manifestations in the world. Each one of these forces has its own specific vibratory wave and rate, and can be evoked (called out) by drum beats or chanting. These sound units also make up the life force (called the Aganyu by the Yorubas) in the body of man. These sound units are distributed throughout the 14 chakras making up the human's subtle body. (**see Tables 5 and 6**).

Theoretically, Yoruba healers viewed the nature of dis-ease and being as force or spirit. Under this system, universal relations were characterized by a process of interchanging

### Table 5

## The Music Harmonics of the Healing Drums

Note and Division	Resonant Frequency (cps)	Orisha mode
C1/1	2160	Ogun
C1/2	4320	Ogun
G1/3	6480	Shango
C1/4	8640	Ogun
E1/5	10800	Oshun
G1/6	12960	Shango
G1/7	25920	Shango

Most books on Yoruba medicine simply mention the spiritual dynamics between the orisha internals, and leave it at that. Now everything in the universe vibrate, including the human spirit and body. Each thing in the universe vibrate to its specific "note", or, "frequency". According to Yoruba medicine men, the vibrating mechanism of the human body is the orisha internals. In Yoruba healing drum ceremonies, the drummers use "polyphonic" music structures. This means that several different rhythms are played simultaneously. This represents the different

orishas in the Universe which co-exist and operate on each other. The Yoruba orchestra normally plays five or more overtones of musical notes in such a way that the overall effect, as in the Universe, is harmonic. The dancing also reflects the rhythmic complexity of the music and the orishas in the body.

For example, when one tone is struck, although we only hear one tone, it is a synthesis of itself and a series of overtones that it generates. Look at the above chart. If we strike the "C" note which vibrates at the rate of 2160 cycles per second (cps) we get the above results. What we will hear is a fusion of this "C" with the "C" eight notes above (4320), the "G" above the preceding "C", the following "C", followed by the "E", "G", and the "G" an octave above. There are seven in all! These dominant tones are also "tonic" to the human body.

The specific effect of each sound upon the life-force has been identified and catalogued by Yoruba priests, in very much the same way chemists catalogued the chemical elements. Summing up, the "C" note, one of the 50 sound units, belongs to the heart center, is green, and stimulates the life force to remove blockages; "E" belongs to the navel region, is bright yellow,

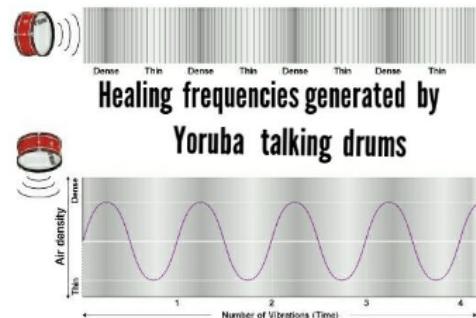
and awakens "Aganyu" to destroy evil spirits, and so on.

**Table 6**  
**Vibrational Frequencies and the**  
**Orisha-Chakras**

Cosmic Chakra	Organs	Color/Element	Note	Souls
Ori Orunmila	Pituitary gland Pineal gland	White light/ Solar System Indigo/OuterSpace	Si La	Divine soul Spirit Guides
Obatala	Lungs Throat	White/Air	A# So	Entities
Ogun	Heart	Green/Air	C# Fa	Rational
Oshun	Solar Plex	Yellow/Fire	Eb Mi	Rational
Yemoja	Genitals	Blue Crystal/Water	F# Re	Animal
Shango	Anus	Red/Earth	GI, D# DO	Gross body

a) **Electromagnetic**

**carrier wave with no modulation in the body**



b) Audio frequency from drum beats

c) Harmonic wave generated by the 50 sound frequencies in the human energy body.

syntheses (orishas, or connections) and contradictions (negative antagonisms). It is the goal of these two relations to find rhythm and harmony in the universe. The rhythmic interchange of orisha spirits and ajogun forces result in the reconciliation of the various balances in nature. There are particular songs or musical tones that have been developed by African healers to stimulate healing of the

various organ systems of the body. To assist in healing an individual who has a liver disease, such as hepatitis, you would evoke "Yemoja" orisha to help balance the liver channel that feed energy (Aganyu) to the liver organ.

### **Dream World to the Orishas**

## P

art of the endeavor in healing under the Yoruba system of divination involves accessing knowledge and wisdom of the "other side", the regions of consciousness beyond physical time, space, and matter. In exploring the realm of the orishas, Yoruba healers used dreaming and trance as a primary tool.

Everyone have had dreams that took them some place other than their bedroom where their sleeping body lies. In the dream world we can easily travel to distant places and times. While dreaming, we are given special understanding that enables us to predict the future and solve many of life's problems. And the Yoruba healers have mastered this "inner technology" to explore the secrets of the orishas. By seeing the dream world through the eyes of a Yoruba priest, you will better understand how

the dream realm represents a major advance in our approach to healing the mind and body.

If you search your memory, you can probably recall one of your most vivid nightmares and remember how real it was. Our dreams contain many of the elements of physical reality - the smells, vivid sights, touch, sound, and powerful emotional contents, and even the ability to effect waking reality. Both men and women have experienced sexual orgasm and ejaculation during dreams. Some people have been reported to have had heart attacks during traumatic dreams. The dream world is just as real as the waking world. Most of us in the West have been conditioned to look at the dream world and waking world as two distinct structures of reality - one "imaginary" and the other "real", or "solid matter". However, in wake of the consciousness revolution in quantum physics, nowadays there is serious question about whether "physical" objects really exist.

Modern physics have opened a window on a mysterious, and possibly a "supernatural" dimension of reality. Physicists insist that there is no such thing as "objective reality" at the subatomic level. Research in quantum science

reveals that matter is not solid at all, but is composed of tiny bits of particles whirling at lightning speed around a huge empty space. When we look at these particles a little bit closer, we discover that they are nothing more than vibrations of energy. This energy exists inside us, outside us, within us, within the atom, within everything.

We know from Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle in physics that at the quantum level, physical particles cannot be said to exist at all until they are observed. Put another way, the perceiver inevitably influences the perception, and this suggests to some scientists that we are actually living in a world of illusion generated within our own minds. We now know that the mind is real. Not only does it "influence" physical things, it quite literally brings the physical world into being. If our thoughts "create" the physical world, then it should be obvious that our thoughts in the dream world can change the physical world.

The ancient Yoruba have long maintained that spiritual energies in the dream world is "made manifest" in the physical world through the Orishas. I am going to attempt to articulate what might be called a "Yoruba" mystical view

current scientific one. It is stitched together using metaphors from different African spiritual traditions in West Africa.

According to the mystical text of the Ifa Corpus, the world is divided into two realms - Aye and the Orun. The Aye is the visible realm where living things dwell and is more tangible and material. The Orun is the realm of the intangible, and invisible. Here live all the spiritual energies, atoms, subatomic particles, Orishas, and the disembodied spirits of the ancestors. The two Worlds coexist, and are interconnected by a space-time zone called "Orita Meta". To keep peace and balance between these Worlds, Oludumare, the Supreme Being, has established a complete system of divine laws called "Aje Chagullia" which is ruled in the Superior Hemisphere. These laws are a Cosmic blueprint of order and equilibrium in order to maintain peace in the family, the community, the laws of nature, the Universe, and the invisible worlds.

It is believed by the Yoruba sages that the human being is composed of four dimensions which are interrelated. There is a world beyond the present three-dimensional world defined by physics as the quantum space-time dimension.

This three-dimensional world is merely a shadow of a fourth-dimensional, non-material world. African sages further believe that this fourth-dimensional world controls the three-dimensional material world through the Orun. The first dimension is the visible body. The second is the Life Force, or Aganyu. The third part is Dya, or shadow - an invisible replica of the human being. It belongs to the etheric-astral energy field and is connected to that realm. Intense fear can cause the Dya to leave the body temporarily. When Dya and the life force leave the body together, the death of the body occurs. At night the double (astral body) may leave and travel in invisible realms resulting in dreams and nightmares. The astral-etheric body is also that part of us that can give us extraordinary power in a crisis. It is the astral realm that the healer travels in to communicate with the spirits.

The fourth dimension of the human being is "Eshu", the interior. This is the center of intelligence and perception. The human interior is formed of contradictory tendencies, weaknesses and strength, and is similar to the structure of the universe. Among the weaknesses are envy, jealousy, and desire for riches and power. Strengths are humbleness,

self-restraint, and silence. The human must attain a balance between the two, for either extreme is not desirable. This balance can be influenced by the spirit of plants and is often effected through the medium of music in healing procedures.

Plant spirit medicine is an African science of spiritual herbalism in which plant orishas bestow their gift of healing. How is that gift invoked? Well, Yoruba medicine men use song, dance, music, prayers, symbolic gestures, pills, and herbal concoctions. For thousands of years, shamans from all around the world have healed with the spirit of plants. This is one of the great medical traditions of Yoruba medicine. Generations of African doctors have catalogued the healing power of certain plant spirits, and yet there is very little literature on the subject.

## Plant Spirit Medicine in Yoruba Tradition

### E

vidence now supports the vision of African spiritual scientists that plants are living, breathing, communicating creatures, endowed with personality and the attributes of soul. It is only we, in our spiritual blindness, who have insisted on considering them to be inanimate. Plants, however, are not under this illusion at all. Plants are a part of nature. They are not separate from nature. Plants live in harmony with nature, and out of this harmony they are ready, willing, and able to cooperate and assist humanity. Without green plants we would neither breathe nor eat. The energy matrix of the human body is patterned from the energy of plants. As Manly P. Hall stated in his book Occult Anatomy of Man "Man is an inverted plant, gaining his nourishment from the sun as the plant does from the earth. As the life of the

plant ascends its stem to nourish its leaves and branches, so the life of man (rooted in the brain) descends to produce the same result".

The food we consume each year, the bulk comes from plants, which synthesizes it out of air and earth with the help of sunlight. We build our homes from plants. All the food, drink, intoxicants, drugs, and medicines that keep man alive and, if used properly, keeps us healthy. According to Yoruba healing science, the Life Force, or Spiritual Energy surrounding all living things is sharable among plants, animals, and humans. Through such sharing, a person and a plant become one. This oneness is what makes possible a mutual sensitivity allowing plant and man not only to intercommunicate, but to interact energetically.

It is a fact that humans can and do communicate with plant spirits. Plants are living beings connected with The Creator. They radiate energy forces that are beneficial to humans. One can feel these forces! They feed into one's own force field, which in turn feeds back energy to the plant. Native American shamans were keenly aware of these energies. When in need, they would go into the woods. With their arms extended, they would place their backs to a pine

tree in order to replenish themselves with its power.

When the Yoruba healer wants to gain information about the healing power of a plant, he gets in contact with the plant orisha through trance. The trance, or dream state takes him into the realm of the astral world. In fact, the astral realm is the real world, not the world of flesh and bones. The real world is where the plant orishas come and communicate. This is the world of our visions and dreams. Whenever we go into the dream world of the orishas, we are opening a channel of divine communion between us and the plant spirits.

In his book, **The role of Herbs and Plant spirits in Traditional African Healing**, Tobae Agbago Ason, states "herbs were used in every facet of healing. There was a spirit associated with each herb that created the healing. Sounds were used to invoke those spirits in different plants (a particular frequency, or note). They also went into altered states through trance and sometimes through chemical means to have access to the information that the herbs could give them. Certain people had trained as long as twenty years in order to hear the spirits of the herbs

talking to them."

As part of your apprenticeship in Yoruba medicine, I offer here a technique I call the "Orisha Spirit Quest" for communicating with plant orishas. They will assist you in your journey of Yoruba divination. We can read about many plants in books, and can even earn a PhD in herbology. But this is not going to make you a stronger healer, or know plants better. We must learn from the plants directly. That's "knowing" the plant. This is how plant spirit medicine works.

The orisha spirit quest involves purposefully using dreams for gathering healing knowledge from plant orishas. The dream journey has many uses, including divination, diagnosis in healing, and as a directory for one's life purpose. The orisha quest often involves fasting for two or three days in the wilderness in order to receive a special communication from an orisha spirit. Guidance from the orishas is considered a gift. The vision imparts the correct answer, or way to proceed in your herbal healing. The plant orishas may appear in many forms. They can be rocks, twigs, animals, plants, human form, or anything with extraordinary meaning within the culture, or to the individual.

## **Performing the Orisha Spirit Quest**

F

irst suspend what you know and believe. This allows you to be open and receptive. To start your spirit quest, obtain the following materials:

- a small drum and someone to beat it for you (if this is not possible, you can use a CD player with an African drumming tape).
- Fresh uncut herbs.
- a small clean bowl to hold the herbs.
- a small pot of water brought to a boil.

Get as alone and quiet as you possibly can to hold your ceremony. Find a power spot -- a personal source of pleasure and strength. First place the fresh herbs in the bowl and place it on a small table in the area where the spirit quest will be performed.

Before beginning approach the plants with an attitude of thankfulness and humility. A prayer should be said over the herbs as they are being prepared. Osain, the divinity-orisha of botany is invoked so that healing powers will be forthcoming. One incantation to Osain is:

**"Ashe Omo Osain Ewe Aye"**

**(The power of Osain's children, the  
plants of the earth)**

Say this song (oriki: songs to orisha) aloud over the herbs. Turn off the boiling pot of water and place some of the herbs in it. Let steep for 5 minutes, and strain the tea into a cup and drink. This allows the plant's ashe essence to be absorbed into the human aura to establish a spiritual communion between you and the plant spirit.

Introduce yourself by name to the plants, and explain that you have come to learn from the species of this plant. Thank the plant for any help it may be willing to give. Since you are asking for a gift, it is only good manners to offer one in return. In Yoruba medicine this is called "efun", which is used to enhance the ashe of the plants. Simply sprinkle the plant with some oil, or cornmeal.

Follow these steps to the letter until such time as your confidence and faith is fully established.

1. You will need a monotonous steady drumbeat of two to four cycles per second, so prepare your drummer, or your tape player. Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Loosen your belt or shirt collar or whatever items of clothing or jewelry that are tight and restrictive. Relax and clear your mind as much as possible. Focus on and hold the question or problem at the center of your consciousness, whatever healing may be needed.
2. While lying down with your eyes closed, take NINE deep breaths. In through the nose and out through the mouth. Make sure that they are DEEP; pull all the air in you can and then a little more; hold it and then expel it all. Contract your abdomen muscles to get out every last drop. Count the breaths in your mind as you go
3. through them. By the fourth breath, you should begin to feel very light-headed and totally relaxed. Start the drumming.
4. After you have finished your breathing, just continue to relax and imagine yourself to be in a totally dark box with only one porthole or round window emitting light. I usually use the hole of a ship but you can put yourself in any dark container you choose just so long as it is pitch black and only the light from the one round window is seen. Imagine the window to be getting smaller and smaller until the light is a super-intense pinpoint like a star on a sheet of black velvet. This is your Spirit Light and will be the vehicle for your travel.
4. Once you have seen this light, send it into a hole in the earth, such as a cave, or an animal hole. Once inside the hole, you will find a tunnel leading downwards. Go down the tunnel. Concentrate

now! Immediately, or sometime after, you will see a bright light at the end of the tunnel. Follow this light. Once you have reached the light, move out of the tunnel and into the light. At this point you will have entered the astral realm - the spirit world of the orishas.

5. It will take a few moments to get accustom to this dream world, but don't be distracted from your original intent. Remind yourself of the answers you seek and then carry on. A guide may appear in the form of a human, or animal. Feel free to accept this help if it feels right. Once you feel assured and confident, start looking for the plant you have come here to meet.

When you have located the plant growing in the orisha world, look around. Scan your surroundings by gently moving your minds eye in different directions--wherever you feel like looking.

Notice unusual objects. You will find a life form associated with the plant. This will be one

of the orisha children of Osain-orisha. They may appear as a person, an insect, an animal, or even a light or disembodied voice. However they appear, this is the form the plant orisha is taking in order to communicate its message to you. Approach the spirit and introduce yourself. Explain that you have come to learn, and ask if you may learn from this plant or use its wisdom. If the response is positive, then ask the orisha to teach you.

The orishas are known to teach in many different forms. It may be in the form of a classroom setting, or perhaps a lecture style. If so, it is important to listen carefully for details. More often than not, the instructions will come in a non-verbal form. The journey can be exotic and strange. Many times one will experience deep emotional trance. Whatever the case, remain aware and attentive. The key is once you ask your question, whatever happens is part of the answer.

When you feel that the spirit quest is complete, return to the orisha and thank it for helping you. Offer to repay the orisha for its kindness, and then take your leave. Retrace your spirit light through the same route, go back through the tunnel, and out of the hole, back

unto yourself. Signal your drummer to stop the beating. It will feel somewhat warm and comfortable as you review what happened in your journey. Lay there a while longer and relax and think about what has just happened.

Once you get up make a note of the details of your experience. Try to be as thorough and precise as possible, write down every subtle detail. This is important because over time, the details will begin to fade from your memory.

Throughout the day, play with these thoughts, feelings, and visions. Notice if symbols, images, and sounds intuitively mean something to you. Further, attend to them by following their lead and using them as guidance. For larger, life-changing directions, investigate further. Enter a full, inner dialogue with yourself using as many modes of perceptions as possible. Sometimes the answers are self-explanatory, and sometimes your answers will come only after strange illuminating experiences which may take place later. Be patient!

Don't be disappointed if you are not able to get answers in your spirit quest the first time you try and don't expect to master the technique the very first time. You are working with a

power latent in Mankind, a power that you have never probably used before. It will take time to get used to. Let the impressions come in and do not expect everything to be crystal clear right off the bat. Work with it. It works!

Using the orisha spirit quest I entered the dream world to visit the "Mullein" flower to seek insights on how to treat a friend's eight year old son who had a speech impairment. This herb figures prominently in herbal divination. It has been used by Yoruba priests to pass over the etheric body for spiritual healing. It is also known for its power against demons. The flower is bright yellow, and the leaves are soft and fuzzy. An oil made from the flower is used for lung diseases and children's earaches. According to Yoruba medicine, this plant is governed by oya-orisha which corresponds to the lungs, and bronchial passages.

My spirit quest to the orisha of this plant took me to a deserted windy island. The plant appeared in the form of a woman with a soft spoken voice with a sweet personality. She was in the company of her counterpart Shango-orisha who appeared as two fiery red stones. He seemed to be protecting Oya from my approach. Suddenly, the fiery stones began to spit fire at

me. So I decided to leave.

It came to me later that the two red stones looked like kidneys spitting fire. Shango is the orisha in charge of the Aganyu (life force) which has its source in the kidneys. It became obvious that my friend's child was suffering from congestion of the kidneys. The vision indicated in my spirit quest provided useful guidance that lead to a cure that several years of doctor visits could not achieve.

Yoruba divination may be regarded as both a science and an art. It assumes the properties of a science when there is a conscious process of discrimination, calculation, and interpretation involved. It may be called an art when it is conducted by subconscious and spiritual means. Consult your instincts, and abide by the answer. Once the techniques are perfected, it is no longer necessary to go into the preliminary preparation but I would recommend that you follow the above steps to the letter until such time as your confidence and faith is fully established.

The dream quest laid down in Yoruba medicine is not isolated to the Yorubas of West Africa. All around the world there are shamans

who heal with the spirits of plants. Egypt, India, China, Australia, and all the other early civilizations believed and practiced plant spirit medicine in one form or another. Even the early Native American medicine men, and the Eskimos of Alaska practiced plant spirit medicine as is illustrated with the "bird wing" carvings on so many Indian totems. There is just too much evidence, both past and present, to dismiss this outstanding phenomena.

### **Plant Spirit Essence and their Treatments**

Another way to utilize plant spirit medicine is to use those herbs that bring something special to the mind and spirit without having any particular physical correspondence. Herbs can be used in orisha spirit quest and can be very helpful to treat many different emotional and spiritual conditions or needs. I will list a few or my favorites with the reason for using them.

#### **Aloe Vera (Aloe Vera)**

Use for burned out feelings.

#### **Angelica (Angelica archangelica)**

Gives a feeling of protection and helps you to receive guidance from orisha spirits.

**Arnica** (*Arnica Montana*)

Use for treatment of deep shock or disappointment.

**Agrimony** (*Agrimonia Eupatoria*)

Helps you go past boundaries. Cools down anger and emotions.

**Balsalm fruit**

Helps bring things together when feeling disconnected.

**Basil** (*Ocimum basilicum*)

Helps to polarize and balance sexuality and spirituality. Also to clean emotional house.

**Blackberry** (*Rubus villosus*)

Helps to translate ideas and goals into workable activity.

**Blue Cohash** (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*)

To Help soften the heart and emotions when you close up and get defensive.

**Borage** (*Borago Officinalis*)

Gives you courage. Lots you feel happiness and joy.

**Burdock** (*Arctium Lappa*)

Helps you let go of the victim mentality

(mix with blue cohosh).

**Cayenne** (*Capsicum frutescens*)

Helps you to accept changes and move toward a definite goal.

**Chamomile** (*Matricaria chamomilla*)

Gives you a serene disposition. Also to overcome anxiety and fear.

**Cotton root bark**

Helps to ease the astral body. Gives you flexibility.

**Black Cohosh** (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)

Gives you the courage to confront abusive or threatening situations.

**Dandelion** (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Gives you plenty of energy and helps to balance inner forces.

**Dang Qui** (*Tangkuei*)

Helps release emotional blockages. Atunes you to the future.

**Echinacea** (*Echinacea angustifolia*)

Helps you to deal with trauma while you're having it. Also helps you welcome change, and release old patterns.

**Evening Primrose** (*Oenothera biennis*)

Helps to form committed relationships, and heal the wife/husband syndrome.

**Garlic** (*Allium sativum*)

Gives you a sense of wholeness

**Goldenrod** (*Solidago spp.*)

Helps balance inner sense of self with social consciousness.

**Goldenseal** (*Hydrastis Canadensis*)

Helps you to establish clarity of the past and present. Opens you to trust.

**Lavender** (*Lavandula officinalis*)

Gives spiritual awareness and sensitivity.

**Milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*)

Gives the strength of ego necessary to stop dependency on food, drugs, or alcohol.

**Mugwort** (*Artemisia vulgaris*)

Allows you to harmonize psychic forces.

**Mullein** (*Verbascum spp.*)

Gives strong sense of conscience and truthfulness.

**Peppermint** (*Mentha piporita*)

Stops mental lethargy and helps balance

metabolism which can deplete your mental forces.

**Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Helps correct poor connection of soul and spirit with the physical body and improves memory.

**Sage** (*Salvia officinalis*)

Gives ability to perceive higher purpose in life.

**St. John's Wort** (*Hypericum perforatum*)

Illuminates consciousness and gives strength to deal with disturbed dreams and psychic experiences.

**Trumpet Vine** (*Campsis tagliabuana*)

Gives you freedom to express yourself verbally.

**Violet** (*Viola odorata*)

Elevates spiritual perspective and makes you highly perceptive.

**Yarrow** (*Achillea Millefolium*)

Creates beneficial healing forces and helps you to have compassionate awareness of others.

The above list of herbs can be used for divination, as a tea, or flower essence tincture to

treat many different emotional and spiritual conditions. There are many plants to help a person enter the dream state of wholeness. Although the physical plant is well suited to the task, it is not necessary to use the physical plant. No matter what the complaint, back pain, lung infection, skin disorder, it's always the same thing: some lesson trying to come out. In Yoruba medicine, there is no enemy, no conflict, no disease, only the opportunity to bring something out of the dream of un-wholeness into; the dream of wholeness.

## **Spiritual Baths**

### **S**

piritual baths play a large part in Yoruba herbology. The value of the spiritual bath is that it protects the body and spirit from negative influences that can lodge into the ashe essence. In this sense, it is used to cleanse oneself of physical impurities, which can hide in our natural, healthy selves.

The spiritual bath actually involves a series of steps tailored by the diviner, or herbalist for specific conditions given over the course of one day to three weeks. As with other aspects of Yoruba medicine, the spiritual bath has been shrouded in much mystery. So I explain it here for home applications. Spiritual baths require the following three stages:

### **Stage 1**

1) Firstly, the correct herbs must be selected, and Yoruba priests base most herbal formulas upon divination. This is achieved by

matching the presiding Orisha, or "egun" with the corresponding herbs to be used and prepared. Herbs prescribed for spiritual baths, of which priests lists well over a hundred, are used for various specific illnesses; in general, the herbs can be used to protect the body of negative energy.

2) During the recommended period of the spiritual bath, one should eat light meals, and eliminate sexual activities and indulgence in alcohol. During this period one should also maintain an emotional balance. Daily prayers and spiritual affirmations are said as well.

3) Before you prepare for a spiritual bath, set up a private area where you cannot be disturbed during the ritual.

### **Stage 2**

1)To prepare for the spiritual bath ritual, you will need a white sheet to wrap yourself in, and a white cotton towel to cover your head right after the bath. The sheet should be cotton as well.

2)The area where you plan to hold your ritual should be cleansed with incense made of myrrh and frankincense.

3)The tub or bathroom vessel that will hold

the spiritual bath solutions should be thoroughly cleaned. This includes the entire area where you will perform the bath.

4)White candles should be lit in the bathroom during the bath.

5)To pursue the full spiritual benefits of the bath, you should sit quietly in a meditative state, or repeat meditative sounds such as sound mantras.

6)When not in use, keep the herbal concentrates in the refrigerator in marked bottles.

### **Stage 3**

1)The spiritual bath is an immersion, and should be prescribed by an herbalist, or Yoruba priest. The herbal solution should be diluted with water (a 12:1 or 8:1 ratio). For example, mix 12 parts of water to 1 part herbal solution. The water should be cool or tepid. Never use hot water. Shake the herbal solution well before pouring it into the tub or sink basin. For best results, pour in the herbal solution first, and then add the water.

2)Before conducting the bath, shower or bathe, using natural soaps and shampoos. Afterwards, you can either remain wet, or pat

yourself dry.

3) You should kneel or stand reverently in the tub or sink area. One should be in a mind of complete conviction when performing the ritual.

4) Slowly pour the herbal solution over your body while reciting prayers aloud for peace and protection.

5) Right after the bath, lightly pat yourself dry, wrap yourself up in the white sheet, and cover your head with the cotton towel.

6) Retire for study, or meditation, or just sit peacefully in a quiet part of the house.

It is recommended that you perform the spiritual bath in the early morning, or at night when it is quiet. You should take a regular bath or shower, after at least four hours has past if necessary. Pregnant or menstruating women should consult a diviner to determine if it is recommended, or advised to take spiritual baths during these times.

## **Preparing the Herbs**

### T

o prepare a spiritual bath, specific herbs are placed into a pot of slowly boiling water. To determine the specific herbs and their Orisha Correspondence refer to Table 7. After boiling the herbs, strain the resultant solution with a muslin cloth or strainer. This resultant solution is what is used for the spiritual bath. Many times, aspirants or priests will add substances such as "efun" and oils to enhance the ashe as needed. There is also another form of spiritual bath called "omiero" in which sacrificial blood is added to the bath solution.

When the herbs are being prepared, prayers are usually said over them. This is to invoke the healing power of "Osain", the divinity of the plants. One should say, "Ashe Omo Osain Ewe Aye" (the power of Osain's children, the plants of the Earth). There are many forms of Yoruba initiations performed at African villages to

initiate one's spirit with herbs (ewe) in order to enhance one's ashe essence.

## Herbal Medicine in the Caribbean

### A

African medicine is by no means confined to the African continent and North America. In the Caribbean Islands, too, traditional African medicine has a long and honored history.

**Table 7 Ewe (Herbs) for Spiritual Baths**

ORISHA	ENGLISH (HERBS)	SPANISH (Hierbas or Planters)
Obatala	Sweet Basil	Albahaca
	Tropical Almond	Almendra
	Green Calaloo	Bledo Blanco
	Wild Tobacco	Salvia

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	Sage	Salvia-de-Castilla
		Paraiso
		Suco Blanco
		Malva
Elegbba	Balmony	Arnansa Guapo
	Guava	Guayaba
	Tobacco	Tabco
	Sugar Cane	Cano
		Abre Camino
		Mejoran
		Almaceyo
		Espartillo
		Albahaca
Ogun	Eucalyptus	Eucalyptus
	Tobacco	Tobacco
		Siempre Viva
		Maravilla
		Romerillo
Oya	Royal Poinciana	Flamboyan

		Cucaracha
		Caimito
		Yucca

**Table 7 Ewe (Herbs) for Spiritual Baths - Continued**

ORISHA	ENGLISH (HERBS)	SPANISH Olierbas or Plantas
Yemoja	Oregano	Marjorana
	Plantain	Platano
	Spearmint	Yerba Buena
	Laurel	Verbena
		Canutillo
		Cucaracha
Oshun	Papaya	Lechosa
	Wild Lettuce	
	Bonset	Rompesaraguey
	Cinnamon	Caisimon
		Cassava
		Boton de Oro Abre Camino Sauco Blanco
Shango	Sacred Picus	Alamo

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	Spanish	Coaba
	Mahogany	
	Cedar	Cedar
	African Teak	Ceiba
	Plantain	Platano
	Bonset	Rompersaraguey
	Sugar Cane	Cano
	Sar-saparilla	Zarzparilla
	Camwood	

In Jamaica, herbal medicine began with the Arawaks, a peace loving people who were the indigenous inhabitants. Anthropologists know relatively little about the language and customs of the ancient Arawaks, who migrated to the islands from South America several centuries ago. But they do know that Arawak, Taino, and Carib tribes cultivated a number of food plants, including cassava, and used many others for medicinal purposes.

The original people used many shrubs and trees to treat various kinds of disease. The

Arawaks used the mauby tree to treat diabetes; soursop, whose leaves were boiled to promote sleep; papaya, whose fruit helped to heal bruises. To the Europeans who invaded and colonized the Caribbean in the 16th century, the plants they found were strange and new. The settlers relied on the Indians to teach them New World herbal medicine. And, in at least one instance, those lessons proved to be invaluable.

Until Columbus's men brought it back with them in the early 1500's, syphilis, a devastating and ultimately fatal venereal disease, was unknown to the Indians. The Indians were also unable to resist measles and smallpox. Europeans fell to syphilis by the thousands as well. Fortunately, Columbus noted that Indians on the island of Hispaniola treated the illness with bark from the lignum vitae tree. For the next two centuries, demand for lignum vitae soared throughout Europe.

Medicinally, lignum vitae contain chemicals that may have helped syphilis victims. The saponins in the resin perhaps did help reduce external lesions and somewhat inhibit the spirochetes, or corkscrew-shaped organisms that cause syphilis.

European colonists also introduced a

number of useful plants to the Caribbean. Breadfruit, imported from the south Pacific by the infamous Captain Bligh, provided Caribbean islanders not only with a nutritious potato-like starch, but a potent medicine as well. Herbalists in Trinidad use the glossy green leaves of the breadfruit tree to treat high blood pressure. And some Jamaicans with migraines apply the crushed leaves to their throbbing heads.

Africans, too, contributed their knowledge of herbal medicine after they were enslaved to work Caribbean plantations. In Barbados, for example, two or three thin slices of papaya are placed over a cut and bandaged to promote rapid healing. Visit a West African village today and you're likely to find a native healer employing just such a remedy.

Caribbean herbal medicine continued to grow throughout the 19th century, with the arrival of Jews and immigrants from India, China, Syria, and Lebanon. African medicine flourished in the Caribbean, in large part, because herbal healing goes hand in hand with African inspired spiritist religions like Obeah, Yoruba, and Santeria. Every village has a mayalist, or bush doctor, from the African word "maya" meaning sorcerer, or wizard. The

mаялист must master the knowledge of plants and their curative powers and use this knowledge only for good.

If they think a wizard has used his knowledge to harm them, some superstitious Jamaicans will ask a "shepherd" or "captain" to give them a spiritual bath. Or they may pay a visit to a psychic, or "mother", who consults spirits and prescribes herbal remedies. In many cases, the patient is healed. Laboratory studies have shown that many of the plants used by African healers contain the chemicals our bodies need to be well. For example, aloe, a common Caribbean succulent, is very effective in treating burns, cuts, and other skin injuries which contains a healing substance known as "aloins".

The practice and development of Yoruba medicine and religious philosophy in the Caribbean is truly unique. After West Africans were captured and enslaved by the Portuguese and transplanted in Brazil, Cuba, and South America, laws were created by plantation owners which forbid the slaves from practicing their cultural and religious beliefs. The reasons were obvious. The ability to identify with an ancestral legacy holds the key to self-empowerment and liberation. Slaves were

brutally beaten if caught practicing Yoruba religious traditions. This forced African slaves to re-fashion traditional African religious concepts in the light of Christianity.

African slaves who were knowledgeable in the mystical wisdom of Yoruba medicine, creatively re-interpreted Yoruba and healing rites along Christian lines. This adaptation allowed them to veil the true elements of Yoruba practice. In Brazil and much of Afro-American religious life of the Americas, each orisha was identified with a specific Christian saint, modeled on the numerous orisha pantheons of the Yoruba people of West Africa.

In the Umbanda cult of Brazil, altars hold small plaster images of the Christian saints associated with the orishas. Each one of the saints presides over a domain of human activity or over a disease, social group, geographic area, or craft. For example, "Omolu", the orisha of smallpox, is identified with St. Lazarus, whose body, in Christian legend, is pocked with sores and who heals diseases of the skin. "Oxossi", the Yoruba god of hunting, is associated with the bellicose St George or St. Michael, the slayers of dragons and other demonic forces. "Yansan", who ate the "magic" of her husband and now

spits up lightning, is associated with St. Barbara, whose father was struck by lightning when he tried to force her to give up her Christian faith.

In the worship site each orisha has its own stone, which is peculiarly shaped, colored, or textured; arranged in a distinctive position on the altar, and identified as the Cross of Christ. A single saint may be identified with several orishas or vice-versa. Caribbean regions vary the saintly identifications and some designations shift over time. Each orisha has its own musical rhythms and sounds. When called by drums, dance, and music, the supernatural being may take over the possessed person, or priest, and reveal valued information.

The process of carrying the Yoruba ideals into the context of Christianity has obscured and distorted the original meaning of the African beliefs. Many of the errors in literary works written about the Yoruba religion have been kept alive and intact because of the belief by numerous Western scholars that the spiritual wisdom of African societies are rooted in pagan and primitive elements. These distortions introduced by Western writers still plague earnest students of Yoruba medicine.

utmost importance because they obscure our instructions for spiritual survival and enlightenment and because they introduce seeming contradictions which in turn raise conscious or subconscious doubts in the mind of sincere seekers of African spiritual traditions.

In recent years, however, much light has been shed on the subject of Yoruba medicine. The eminent Black scholar Ra Un Nefer Amen, author of *Metu Neter*, states:

"A careful study of the literature of the Kabala, the Old, and New Testament will reveal that the angels depicted perform most of the functions of the "deities" of other so-called polytheistic cultures. Like Elegba of the Yorubas, for example, Raphael, the 'airy' angel is a mediator between God and the prophets (mediums)... They (angels) possess the spirit and borrow the bodies of the meditators to heal, counsel, admonish, teach the community, and carry out many other functions"

The orisha spirits of Yoruba theology are exact correlates to the angels in other traditions. In fact, most of them were taken directly from ancient Canaanite and Egyptian sources. There are those who make a serious mistake by thinking that each of the seven major orishas, or angels are "gods" that were worshiped. The truth is, the Western mentality found African spiritual traditions too abstract to understand. According to African spiritual scientists, the seven distinct orishas are "personality types" (archetypes). Shango is the archetype of mature manhood, fatherhood, male leadership and kingship. Yemoja is the archetype of mature womanhood, motherhood, female leadership, and queen-mothership. Ogun is the archetype of the pioneering, enterprising, defensive, and aggressive personality type. In West African societies these archetypes serve as abstract models for affecting the spirit of its followers. For example, if the Yoruba priest wanted to bring out of latency "courage" in a young male, the orisha "Ogun" would be called (evoked) within the personality complex of the boy to help bring out "courage". Ra Un Nefer Amen then proceeds to explain:

"Since we are each born in intimate

association with only one of these seven personality types, the practice of invoking, or evoking (calling out) the non-natal personalities, seems to the spiritually immature as if beings external to ourselves, were being called upon. We must clarify this point. Although all personalities are latent in our Self, the other six that a person is not born with are outside of her person."

The process is exactly the same when addressing disease and sickness. The healer considers the entire complex of symptoms (whole) in a patient, and treats the disease from a spiritual, emotional and physical perspective. This is the true meaning of "holistic" medicine. All aspects of the human being are treated as opposed to the "fractional" system of Western medicine where only organs are treated. For example, if a woman is suffering from infertility, the African healer would treat this condition with the appropriate herbs, in addition to instructing the patient to chant the sound mantra of "Yemoja", the orisha of the "protective energy of the feminine force". The evocation of this energy center results in a lowered metabolic rate which is conducive to the healing of the ovaries. This method will also consist of a full blown ritual involving

drumming, dancing and the use of many other techniques.

Today, interest in Caribbean medicine is stronger than ever. If you doubt that, visit the marketplaces in Charlottesville, Tobago, or Castries, St. Lucia. In stall after stall you'll find hankerchiefed women hawking piles of aromatic bark and leaves used for medicine.

If you'd like to try African Caribbean medicine, visit a grocery store or Caribbean market. There you'll find most of the fruits and spices employed on the islands. Don't try to treat yourself for a serious condition. And never use an herb unless you're absolutely certain that it is safe.

## Materia Medica of Caribbean/African Herbs

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or those who would like to experiment with traditional Caribbean remedies, I give here a small Materia Medica of herbs:

### **ALLSPICE**

Pimento, Jamaican pepper  
(*pimenta officinalis*)

ALLSPICE is an evergreen tree grown in Jamaica and throughout the West Indies. The dried, ground berries are familiar to American cooks as an aromatic spice. But Caribbean Bush doctors grind allspice to make a stimulating plaster said to relieve rheumatism and neuralgia. Herbalists also extract oil from the fresh green leaves of the all spice tree to treat indigestion. Allspice tea is said to stop diarrhea. Some Studies have indicated that allspice

ointment is an effective anesthetic.

### **ALOE**

Barbados aloe, Curacao aloe  
(*Aloe Vera*)

Outside Poinciana Beach Resort in Negril, Jamaica, you'll find many people using aloe vera to protect their skin from sunburn. You'll find Aloe vendors just about everywhere you go in the Caribbean. Cubans, Haitians, and Mexicans mix aloe gel with water and lemon juice as a tonic to improve digestion. It also relieves mosquito bites. Originally from Africa, aloe has been used medicinally since the 4th Century B.C. clinical tests show that aloe promotes healing in tissue injuries such as Burns and cuts. It does so by stopping your body from forming scarring chemicals called thromboxanes. The chrysophanic acid in aloe accelerates healing as well. Aloe is even used by some Bush doctors as an anti-cancer drug.

Today aloe vera is also used by West African and Caribbean women for the relief of menstrual irregularities, adverse menopausal symptoms, and for healing women who have had hysterectomies. It is believed by many healers that aloe contains estrogenic precursors

which benefit the maintenance of female hormones.

Dosage: 1/2 to 1 tsp. of the powdered root taken in capsules or steeped in a cup of boiling water with a couple slices of fresh ginger root. Two tsp. of the gel is taken once or twice a day with water or apple juice.

### **BANANA**

#### **(Musa sapienta)**

Energy Flavors: cold, sweet Orishas affected: Obatala, Orunmila

High in potassium and vitamins A, B, and C, bananas are used as medicine throughout the Caribbean. Caribbean herbalists have traditionally used green banana skins with kerosene oil for making a poultice to remove poisons or infections of the skin. Banana skins also contain chemicals known to dissolve warts when applied as a wrap. The banana is said to be the food of Obatala because of its benefits to the skin and its action against toxins and alcoholism. According to Yoruba Cosmology, Obatala was sent by Oludumare to create the Universe and mankind, but got drunk on palm wine (spirits) before completing the human being. Obatala is the Creator of human form,

and cures illnesses of the joints and bones. Yoruba healers, therefore, use the banana to lubricate dryness, and clear heat from sufferers of arthritis.

### **CAYENNE**

#### **Bird pepper, African red pepper**

(Capsicum Frutescens)

Energy and Flavors: Hot, pungent taste  
Orishas affected: Shango

Cayenne pepper is a small shrubby plant that grows in Africa and tropical America. Cayenne is also commonly called African Bird Pepper, and is used in making hot sauces and Jerk. Cayenne pepper is a potent stimulant. That's why islanders use this perennial plant to treat arthritis and muscle pains by rubbing a little cayenne tincture over the inflamed joints and wrapping a red flannel around it overnight. The pain is usually gone by morning. Because it increases blood flow, cayenne is excellent for the circulatory system. And, believe it or not, many bush doctors use it to heal stomach and intestinal ulcers. Cayenne is used by African herbalists to treat many complaints including colds, flus, hoarseness, lumbago, diarrhea, constipation, and hemorrhoids. As a daily tonic,

it is very effective in protecting the immune system to throw off the invading factors causing disease.

Dosage: 1-3 grams in decoction, and 500 milligrams for powder.

### **GINGER**

#### **(*Zingiberis Officinalis*)**

Energy and Flavors: slightly warm, spicy  
Orishas affected: Oshun, Yemoja

As a stimulant and expectorant, ginger root has been used for centuries especially as a remedy for nausea and other stomach ailments, as well as for colds, congestion, and sore throats. For vomiting and nausea take warm ginger tea. In Yoruba medicine, ginger is the food of the Orisha Oshun because of its power to assist the digestive process and its antidote for food poisoning. The perennial plant is indigenous to tropical Asia, but cultivated widely in the Caribbean. Women in Dominica boil an ounce of ginger in two cups of water for five minutes to treat premenstrual syndrome. The root can also be used to treat sea sickness by chewing on the root. Ginger is specific for a cold, abdominal pain and moist coughs. For the first signs of the common cold, cough, etc., take

ginger tea sweetened with a little raw sugar or honey. Fresh ginger can be used topically to relieve sprains, injuries and rheumatic pains. Grate the fresh ginger into a pan of boiling water until it turns yellow. Dip a cloth into the solution and apply locally as needed.

Dosage: 3-9 grams

### **GUAVA**

#### **Guayaba, goyave, guajava**

(*Psidium guayava*)

Energy and Flavors: neutral, sweet  
Orisha affected: Oshun, Elegba

High in vitamins A and C, guava is a staple fruit in many Caribbean islands, where its antibacterial leaves are used for bathing wounds. It is also useful for diarrhea. To make a tea for diarrhea, steep three guava leaves in a cup of boiling water for 15 minutes.

### **GUMBO LIMBO**

(*Bursera simaruba*)

Energy and Flavors: cool, bitter, sweet  
Orishas affected: Oya

Found throughout the Caribbean, gumbo limbo produces leaves with high tannin content. Islanders use gumbo limbo leaves to treat

contusions, rashes, diarrhea, bruises, back pain, muscle strain, lethargy, and fever. You can use gumbo limbo in healing oils and salves to promote healing and relieve skin irritations. The leaves can be used in a tea for which it is used both internally and externally. Gumbo limbo nourishes Oya. Simmer the leaves in a pint of water for 20 to 30 minutes.

### **HIBISCUS**

#### **Chou blak**

(Hibiscus sabdariffa)

Energy and Flavors: cooling, sweet-bitter, pungent Orishas affected: Shango, Oya, Oshun

High in vitamin C, red hibiscus blossoms are brewed to soothe colds and coughs. Haitians steep three fresh leaves in hot water for five minutes to calm nerves and promote sleep: It is also used to neutralize poisons, heal swellings and relieve pain. Hibiscus is effective for intestinal infections and is locally applied for hemorrhoids, sores, carbuncles. In Africa, and the Caribbean, hibiscus flower tea is appreciated as a healthful beverage. In the Southern parts of the United States it is commonly known as okra and used in gumbo.

Dosage: 5-10 grams

### **LEMONGRASS**

#### **Fever grass**

(*Cymbopogon citratus*)

Energy and Flavors: sour, cool

Orishas affected: Oya, Yemoja

A tall grass used often in Thai and Vietnamese cooking, this lemony-tasting herb is used in the Caribbean to make a tea for fever and colds. This herb is considered to be a very important herb to Yemoja, as she is the nurturer and mother of Oshun who is fond of babies. It is one of the most pleasant tasting herbs we have for all fevers. Therefore, it is a great all around herb to use for infants and children who will benefit from its calming effect and taste. Boil the grass in water. Cook down to one-half its original volume. Add honey to this volume. Keep refrigerated.

Dosage: give one tsp. 3 times a day.

### **LIGNUM VITAE**

Tree of Life (*Guaicum officinale*)

Energy and Flavors: Cool, bitter Orishas affected: Oya, Oshun

Lignum vitae leaves are used to treat rheumatism, asthma, high blood and diabetes.

Its bark and resin is used by Caribbean bush doctors to treat gonorrhea, syphilis, gout, skin diseases, and reduced menstrual flow. be especially indicated for the imbalance of Oshun. Dosage: 30-60 grains of wood shavings; resin, 5-15 grains.

### **SARSAPARILLA**

(*Smilax Officinalis*)

Energy and Flavors: sweet, mildly spicy, neutral energy Orishas affected: Yemoja, Oshun, Shango

Sarsaparilla root is used by Jamaican root doctors to treat skin disorders, liver problems, rheumatism and hormone imbalances. There are many species of this herb, and it varies in different geographical areas. Generally the best quality Sarsaparilla is the Jamaican species. Honduran and Mexican are also very good. Sarsaparilla is excellent for chronic hepatic disorders, venereal diseases like gonorrhea and syphilis, and for female leucorrhea, herpes and other skin disorders caused by blood impurities. It combines well with yellow dock, sassafras, burdock, dandelion and red clover. It is also used to help epilepsy and other nervous system disorders.

Dosage: 6-15 grams in decoction; tincture, 10-30 drops.

### **NUTMEG**

(*Myristica fragrans*)

Energy and Flavors: pungent, warm  
Orishas affected: Obatala, Oshun, Shango

Nutmeg is a tropical evergreen tree native to Indonesia but cultivated in the southern Caribbean, particularly in Grenada.

It was the search for nutmeg and other spices that brought Columbus to the New World. Today, islanders know it as a tonic to improve appetite or settle upset stomachs. Nutmeg is used to treat chronic diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal distension. It is warming to the spleen and stomach and helps to regulate the flow of chi (Shango).

Dosage: 3-9 grams CAUTION: If you ingest more than half a teaspoon, you'll discover that nutmeg is also a potent hallucinogen. Eating just two nutmegs can be fatal.

### **PAPAYA**

**Paw paw, papaw, lechosa, melon zapote, fruta bomba, maroon**

(*Carica papaya*)

Energy Flavors: neutral, sweet Orishas affected: Ogun, Shango

This wide-ranging fruit contains papain, a digestive enzyme used commercially in meat tenderizers. Another enzyme, carpain, is prized by Jamaicans as a heart remedy. The green fruit may be used to treat ulcers and infectious wounds. On the islands, two or three slices of papaya are placed over a cut and bandaged to promote rapid healing. It also tonifies the chi and blood, treats stomach ache, dysentery, and difficult bowel movements. Jamaican bush doctors use the papaya seeds to help regulate urine flow, and for rheumatic complaints. The papaya belongs to Ogun and, since he is the patron of iron (iron in blood), all things related to metals are related to him. His energy lives in the forests, in shrubs, in the mount, and everything that is green.

### **SEA GRAPE**

Uva e playa, rezin l'an me (*Coccoloba* *uniflora*)

Energy and Flavors: warm, bitter, sweet, astringent taste Orishas affected: Yemoja, Ogun, Shango

There are more than 150 species of this tree

that grows abundantly along the beaches of tropical America. Its astringent roots, leaves, and bark have been used by islanders to make a tea to treat hoarseness, asthma, hemorrhages, and diarrhea. Its bark, leaves, and roots are also used in the treatment of excessive menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia) and vaginal discharge (leucorrhea). For men they are used along with other herbs to treat gleet (penile) discharge, and enlarged prostate. Externally the tea is used for wounds, skin eruptions, rashes, and hemorrhoids.

### **SOURSOP**

Corosol, guanabana (*Annona muricata*)

Energy and Flavors: cool, sour

Orishas affected: Obatala, Elegba, Oshun, Ogun

Soup Sop, or Graviola is a small, upright evergreen tree growing 5 to 6 meters in height with large dark green and glossy leaves. It is indigenous to most of the warmest tropical areas in South and North America including the Amazon. It produces a large heart-shaped edible fruit that is 6-9 inches, yellow green in color, with white flesh. The fruit is sold in local markets in the tropics where it is called

Guanabana, or Brazilian Cherimoya. Caribbean bush doctors use all parts of the Graviola tree for natural medicines including the bark, leaves, roots, fruit and seeds. Different properties and uses are attributed to the different parts of the tree. The fruit and fruit juice is taken for worms and parasites, to cool fevers, to increase mother's milk after childbirth, and as an astringent for diarrhea and dysentery. The crushed seeds are used as a vermifuge against internal and external parasites and worms. The bark, leaves and roots are considered sedative, antispasmodic and nervine, and a tea is made for various nervous conditions.

Sour Sop has a long history of use in Yoruba medicine as well as a long recorded indigenous use by Native Americans, and Caribbean healers. In the Peruvian Amazon the bark, roots, and leaves are used for diabetes and as a sedative. Indigenous tribes in Guyana use the leaf or bark of Graviola as a sedative and heart tonic. In Jamaica, Haiti, and the West Indies, the fruit and/or fruit juice is used for fevers, parasites, diarrhea, coughs, asthma, hypertension, difficult childbirth, and gripe.

### NATURAL ANTI-CANCER TREATMENT

Many of the bioactive compounds found in Graviola show active cytotoxicity against cancer cells. One of the phytochemicals found in graviola called annonaceous acetogenins has been reported and patented for its anti-tumor, anti-cancer, and pesticidal properties. One scientific study demonstrated that Graviola was selectively toxic to colon cancer cells in which it was 10,000 times the potency of Adriamycin (a chemotherapy drug). Graviola is safe enough that it protects healthy cells instead of killing them, doesn't cause extreme nausea or hair loss and this treatment doesn't make cancer patients drop huge amounts of weight, get weak, or compromise their immune systems. However, it should not be taken on an empty stomach.

Dosage: cup leaf infusion or bark decoction 1-3 times daily; or 1-3 ml of a 4:1 tincture twice daily; or 2 to 5 grams of powdered leaves in tablets or capsules twice daily.

### TAMARIND

#### **Tamarindo, tamarin**

(*Tamarindus indica*)

Energy and Flavors: cool, sweet-sour  
Orishas affected: Oya, Oshun, Obatala

Native to Africa but widely cultivated in the

Caribbean, tamarind produces a pulp-filled pod that has long been used as a laxative and gargle for sore throats. The leaves can be added to a bath and used to treat prickly heat, measles, chickenpox, and fever. Tamarind is a diuretic and has been used to treat indigestion, sunstroke, and alcohol intoxication. Because it is high in vitamin C, it's also good to prevent scurvy. A tea from the leaves is used to treat worms, dysentery, diabetes, and coughs. Pounded strips of bark have been ingested to cure diarrhea. A tea from the roots is used to treat constipation, chest congestion, and leprosy. Clinical tests have shown that tamarind fruit is an antibiotic against bacteria, yeast, and fungi. Haitians and Jamaicans use it for stomach aches.

### **RED RASPBERRY LEAF**

#### **Rubus idaeus**

(Rosaceae)

Energy and Flavors: cool, leaves are mildly bitter, berries are sweet and sour.

Orishas affected: Yemoja

According to Yoruba priests, red raspberry is a divine gift to mothers and babies by Yemoja. This is an herb that works on the female

reproductive organs, by toning, stimulating and regulating them more effectively than any other known herb. Red raspberry leaf has been used to treat dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation) and amenorrhea (scanty menstruation). Red raspberry tea with a little composition powder drank during labor has produced great success in deliveries. Red raspberry is also known to prevent miscarriage, after pains, urinary problems, colds and fevers. Raspberry is a long established African and Caribbean remedy for diarrhea and dysentery. The diluted fruit juice is excellent to give as a fever drink when combined with honey.

Dosage: 3-9 grams.

### **CERASEE**

**Karela, balsam apple, paoka, mexicaine, caprika**

Energy and Flavors: cool, sweet-sour  
Orishas affected: Obatala, Yemoja, Ogun

Cerasee is native to Africa, the Middle East and the Mediterranean area. It was introduced to Brazil by African slaves and from there it spread to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. A tea made of the vine is used for diabetes, hypertension, worms, dysentery,

malaria and as a general tonic and blood purifier. It is also very effective to relieve constipation and colds and fevers in children. Women in South America and the Caribbean use the leaf for menstrual problems to promote discharge after childbirth. The tea is taken for 9 days after giving birth to clean out and tone up all the organs involved in the delivery. Cerasee is also used as a natural method of birth control, by taking two cups each day after intercourse, for three days. It is said that women who drink Cerasee daily will not conceive during that time. As a wash, the tea is used externally for sores, rashes, skin ulcers and all skin problems. A Cerasee bath is good for arthritis, rheumatism, gout, and other similar ailments.

In Brazil, Cerasse tea is used as a tonic and remedy for colds, fever and pains due to arthritis and rheumatism. In Curacao and Aruba, the tea is used to lower blood pressure. In Cuba, Cerasee tea is used as a remedy for colitis, liver complaints, fever and as a skin lotion. A tea of the root is used to expel kidney stones. The juice of the ripe fruit, which contains valuable enzymes and minerals, is taken for diabetes. Researchers at the University of Miami School of Medicine have found an element, known as "Guanylate Cyclase" in the

ripe fruit that has the ability to inhibit the growth of cancer caused by chemicals.

### **DEVIL'S CLAW**

#### **Grapple plant**

(*Harpogophytum procumbens*) Energy and Flavors: Cool, bitter Orishas affected: Yemoja, Oshun

Devil's claw is considered by traditional African doctors to be a potent bitter. Bitter principles, like the "iridoid glycosides" found in devil's claw, stimulate the stomach to increase the production of acid, thereby helping to improve digestion. Numerous tribes native to southern Africa have utilized devil's claw for a wide variety of conditions, ranging from gastrointestinal difficulties to arthritic conditions.

South African doctors have a long history of using Devil's claw for traditional African medicines. It is used as a tonic, particularly to the digestive system, for arthritis and rheumatism, to reduce fevers, and for headaches. It is also made into an ointment and applied to sores, boils and ulcers. Hottentot, Bushman and Bantu women applied it during labor to relieve pain. (Warning: do not take

during pregnancy). A decoction, made by simmering the tubers in boiling water, is normally drunk.

Dosage: 1 tsp. of powder is taken three times daily; tincture, 10-30 drops four times a day; standard dosage in formulas, 3-9 grams.

## **Traditional African Herb Formulas**

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traditional African herbalists classified plant remedies in terms of their therapeutic energies - hot, cold, or neutral. They also identified plants according to their flavors such as spicy, salty, sour, sweet, and bitter. These qualities stimulate different therapeutic effects in the human body. With this system, African herbalists refined a complex set of herbal principles that produced spiritual, physiological, and psychological effects to promote good health in the human organs. This science became the basis for African herbal medicine.

African herb doctors from all over the African continent developed many herb formulas especially to treat acute and chronic diseases. Many of the roots and barks used to make African herb remedies taste quite bitter or spicy. The reason for this is because bitter plants

have medicinal properties that boost the immune system and "inoculate" the body from an assortment of diseases such as malaria, infections, flus, fevers, colds, TB, smallpox, influenza, HIV, and AIDS. Their general effect, however, is to neutralize toxic wastes in the blood, lymph system, and liver. Those that are suffering from various chronic conditions will find the following formulas useful in preventing, treating, and healing disease.

#### **African-Islamic Cancer Formula**

Obtain the following herbs:

1/2 kg of pure honey

3 large tablespoons of black seed

1 head of garlic

5 large tablespoons of myrrh

4 tablespoons of Asafetida

First, grind the garlic and black seed together. Mix well with honey. Each morning, take a medium sized spoonful from the above mix and take one piece of myrrh the size of a coffee bean and another piece of asafetida the size of an adas seed. Drink this mixture with a cup of fresh cold milk. Continue this therapy for three months until cancer has vanished. This formula has effectively cured cancers of all

types, including brain tumors.

#### **Anti-plague Remedy**

Obtain one pint each of the following herbs:

Lady's slippers

Hyssop

Slippery elm

Cayenne pepper

Iceland moss

Licorice root

Mullien

Hibiscus flowers

Honey

Mung beans

To one quart of apple cider vinegar add eight ounces of freshly squeezed garlic juice. To this, the above herbs will be added. The herbs are first prepared by slowly simmering four ounces of herbs in a quart of water until the water is reduced to one pint. This concentrate is then combined with the apple cider vinegar and garlic, to which is added 2 pint of vegetable glycerin and 2 pint of honey to preserve the mixture.

This formula is the herbalist's equivalent of

inoculation for the prevention of disease and negative forces, particularly during a time when so many new and virulent diseases are infecting people world-wide. These diseases sweep rapidly through people, who lack immunity against them.

**Dose:** one tablespoon three times daily (in the case of flu, take it hourly). For children 8 to 12 years - one half dose; 4 to 8 years - one-quarter dose.

### Haitian Purification Drink

Combine the following herbs:

1/2 cup fresh lemon juice  
1 tbsp. Horseradish root powder  
1 garlic clove  
1/8 tbsp. cayenne pepper  
1 tbsp. ginger root powder  
1 cup of cabbage juice  
1 tbsp. comfrey powder  
1 cup celery juice  
1 cup of diluted carrot juice  
1/4 cup parsley juice  
1 tbsp cascara sagrada powder  
1/4 cup of Lecithin granules

2 cups of fresh grapefruit juice

1 cup of distilled water

Mix the above herbs in a blender and drink for seven days. This simple and effective Haitian concoction flushes the kidneys, liver, stomach and spleen systems.

### Anti-anemia Remedy

An effective treatment for anemia can be made by making a syrup of Oregon grape root and yellow dock root by cooking four ounces of each root, in two quarts of distilled water down to one quart. Strain and add 1 pint of blackstrap molasses and 1/2 pint of collard greens juice. Take two tablespoons, three or four times daily.

### Spirit Possession Formula

Combine the following herbs:

2 parts Licorice  
2 parts Ginseng  
4 parts Scullcap  
2 parts Ladies slippers  
5 parts Horsetail  
2 parts Ginger root  
2 pieces Jujube  
2 parts Chamomile

This traditional formula is said to be good for driving out demonic spirits, relieving stress, and calming mental instability, such as hysteria, nervous exhaustion, insomnia, and sleep walking.

#### **Yemoja force Fibroid formula**

Combine the following herbs:

Shepherd's purse

Black haw

Trillium

Wild yam

Red Raspberry leaf

Slippery elm

To help with excessive bleeding and shrinkage of fibroid tumors, a combination of the above herbs in tincture form (fifteen to twenty drops each) should be taken in a tea three or four cups a day. In addition, dairy products including milk, cheese, butter, eggs, sugar, and red meats should be avoided according to Yoruba medicine. These foods contribute to tumor growth.

#### **Black Dalit Anti-Diabetic formula**

The following herbs should be combined:

Jambul seeds

Uva ursi

Goldenseal

Raspberry leaves

Blueberry leaves

This is one of the most effective African diabetes formulas. The main herb is the Jambul seed which can be purchased from Ayurvedic herb sources. All the herbs in this formula should be taken in tincture form. Take 10 drops of each herb in a tea, three times daily.

#### **Tonic for the Female Reproductive organs**

4 parts Red raspberry leaf

2 parts Goldenseal

1 parts Wild ginger

2 parts Wild yam

2 parts Rose flowers

Drink the combined herbs in a tea, two times daily. This special formula helps to regulate and tonify the reproductive organs, promotes menses, opens the feminine life force, prevents miscarriage, relieves painful child births, and treats menstrual cramps, diarrhea,

painful menstruation, colds and fevers.

**Ajamu Male Prostate Balance**

Saw palmetto berries

Echinacea root

Gravel root

Sarsaparilla

First macerate 1/2 onion and five cloves of garlic in a blender. Add this to one ounce of honey. Simmer the above herbs in one quart of distilled water down to one pint. Strain the liquid into the onion and garlic mix. Dosage: take two tablespoons three, or four times daily. This formula is an effective herbal treatment for prostate enlargement.

**Vita Balance**

To balance and tonify the endocrine glands and Orisha energy centers combine the following herbs:

2 tspLicorice

2 tspBlack Cohosh

2 tspSarsaparilla

3 tspDang gui

2 tspSaw Palmetto berries

2 tspKelp

1 tspGoldenseal

1 tspGinger root

1 tspLobelia

2 tspGinseng

These herbs should be made into a powder and taken in two "oo" capsules three times daily as an orisha tonic formula. This formula was taught to me by my herbal teacher Dr. Michael Tierra.

**Jamaican Root Skin Cleanser Formula**

Combine the following herbs:

4 tbspSarsaparilla Root

4 tbspYellow Dock Root

4 tbspDandelion root

2 tbspMilk Thistle

2 tbspOregon Grape Root

2 tbspMyrrh

2 tbspScullcap

2 tbspRhubarb Root

2 tbspGravel Root

1 tbspLobelia

1 tbspSassafras

1 tbspMarshmallow root

This formula is used to treat skin diseases, including eczema, psoriasis, athlete's foot, acne, boils, pimples, etc. According to African principles, skin eruptions are usually caused by imbalances in the kidneys and liver. The above herbs are designed to detoxify and help the skin throw off waste. One should avoid eating animal proteins, white sugar, and fruit juices during the healing process. Dosage: Make a strong decoction of the herbs in one quart of water to a pint of water and take three cups daily. Add honey for taste. You will usually see results in two to four weeks.

#### **Anti—High Blood Pressure Syrup**

A syrup of garlic is prepared by adding 1/2 ounce of fresh garlic juice to one ounce of honey. Make an infusion of one ounce of Hawthorn berries in one quart of distilled water. Strain the resultant liquid into the syrup and mix. Take three tablespoons daily. This special formula is very effective in regulating blood pressure. In general, African healing principles do not seek to lower high blood pressure; rather it considers the overall health and balance of the body on the basis of nutrition.

#### **The African Holistic Model of HIV-AIDS and its Treatment and Cure**

Within the last several years, Traditional African doctors started focusing on a treatment for HIV-AIDS in southern Africa, using local medicinal plants. From past experience, they knew of certain plant species which had anti-viral properties and their efforts were focused on these plants. Recently a number of traditional African doctors have established therapeutic herbal compounds which are effective in treating and curing AIDS and HIV with no side effects. The South African herbs "African cucumis", "African gladiolus", and "Hypoxis rooperi" has joined this list.

Therapy for an immune system disease such as HIV infection, which causes AIDS, is currently being approached in two different ways:

1)The attempt to restore the immune system's ability to defend the body using a biological response modifier; and

2)Through ongoing efforts to develop a vaccine against the HIV infection, which so far has been unsuccessful.

AIDS cannot be solved using animal pus

(vaccination), or chemical serums and drugs. AIDS like all diseases, according to African principles, is a violation of dietary laws of the body, including harmful chemicals introduced into the body's blood stream. So far, Western medical science has not cured cancer, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), hepatitis, or even the common cold! Therefore, the solution to the AIDS epidemic is beyond the scope of Western disease theory.

An herbal nutritional approach to AIDS is key to restoring the body's immune system. African herbal formulas provide herbs, and plant combinations that have shown powerful therapeutic benefit in the prevention and treatment of HIV-AIDS.

The disease called AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) results in the collapse of the body's defense system against disease. It is known to severely lower the count of helper T-lymphocytes and thus the body becomes susceptible to a host of life-threatening infections and certain cancers. Western medicine currently defines AIDS as a disease caused by a retrovirus, which spread through sexual fluids and blood.

But according to some of the most

prominent doctors and scientists around the world, AIDS is a man-made laboratory virus created by a secret U.S. government program called MK-NAOMI. MK-NAOMI is the code for the development of AIDS. The "MK" portion stands for the two co-authors of the AIDS virus, Robert Manaker and Paul Kotin. The "NAOMI" portion stands for "Negroes are Only Momentary Individuals." In fact, Dr. Boyd E. Graves revealed conclusive evidence in his book, "The Smoking Gun of AIDS: a 1971 Flowchart", that proves a secret federal plot to develop a "contagious cancer" that "selectively kills". The virus program was headed by Dr. Robert Gallo to create a biological weapon with the full support of the U.S. government in 1971. The true history of the origin of AIDS can be traced throughout the 20th century and back to 1878. Over the years, the AIDS virus has been classified by other names such as the "mycoplasma", and "visna" virus. Today, it is Africa and African Americans who are the hardest hit by this synthetic disease.

However, traditional African doctors believe that AIDS and AIDS Related Conditions are "systemic". Systemic means a weakness, or deterioration of all the bodily organs, blood cells, tissues, bones, muscles, nerves, and organ

networks. Therefore, the AIDS virus is only a cofactor, and that an immune system weakened by food toxins and chemical exposure, nutrient deficiencies, years of improper dietary and lifestyle habits, stress, and other factors play an important role in immune system breakdown.

In any event, individuals afflicted with HIV and AIDS are merely showing signs (symptoms) that are due to a total collapse of the health of the body. This retrovirus sets the stage for a myriad of infections and health complaints that have built up, caused by faulty T-cell organization, and is programmed into the DNA of the blood cells polluting all of our tissues and cells. Because AIDS is a systemic chronic disease, it can take up to 3 to 14 years before it expresses the classified symptoms of Western medical definitions. Because people do not realize they have HIV, they sexually spread the disease to other people with already weakened immune systems.

The fact is, Western medicine is ill equipped to do a pre-AIDS, or early diagnosis of AIDS before it has advanced to the terminal stage. The sooner such a diagnosis is implemented upon learning of pre-AIDS status, the better the chances of delaying immune

deterioration and prolonging health.

In Traditional African medicine, disease diagnosis takes place before the symptomatic signs of AIDS. Ancient Africans believed that defense of the body starts with a crucial support of natural foods and herbal nutrients to boost immune system function. Immunity is first built and established in the stomach, digestive system and colon. The modern Western diet consist of disease producing foods. Thus, when we eat fried foods, salt, saturated oils, white sugar, and red meats, we are putting poisons into our systems. Weakened or diseased food will produce weakened and diseased blood and organs. At the same time, toxins, including the various anti-biotic drugs and hormones used in pharmaceutical drugs and in the meat industry is also destroying our immune systems. Medical Antibiotics (Tetracycline, or Penicillin) are 100% immune suppressive. The continuous use of these antibiotic drugs destroys the human immune system.

To date, there is still quite alot of controversy about the primary cause of immunity in the body. Western physiologists hold that red blood cells are produced in the bone marrow which are called B-cells. B-cells

are responsible for producing anti-bodies in the blood to attack foreign agents which invade the body. Traditional African doctors cite the small intestines and stomach as being the primary place where red blood cells are produced in the body. Therefore, a healthy immune system is then dependent on good blood, and good quality red blood cells, in turn, is dependent upon good quality food and proper food digestion.

The Western medical conception of disease is purely "symptomatic" in its approach and does not seek to effect the deepest underlying causes of disease. This symptomatic approach is effective with acute diseases, but the problem occurs when diseases and situations arise which cannot be affected by a simple symptomatic treatment or vaccine, and must be treated "systematically". It is under these conditions that a purely holistic herbal philosophy to healing becomes important to consider. Ancient Traditional African doctors discovered that immune boosting herbs were particularly useful for treating wasting diseases of their day, and it is probably valuable today for treating AIDS, a 20th century wasting disease.

### African Anti-AIDS Formulas

#### Impi

The herbal formula Impi was developed by traditional African doctors using African medicinal plants that have shown positive in-vivo and in-vitro results against the HIV virus. In-vitro tests carried out by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) have already proved that one of the plant species used in Impi kills the HIV virus while simultaneously allowing for the reproduction of human cells. Pharmaceutical companies may question such claims and downplay this product, but in-vitro tests and in-vivo results are authoritative and it is science itself that is proving the properties of this formula. Impi also contains other medicinal plants whose properties are anti-viral and anti-parasitical in order to prevent diseases of opportunity. Impi's results are felt within the first month of usage.

#### Is it a cure?

Impi's exceptional results in HIV-AIDS patients, made some traditional doctors in south Africa believe that it is a cure, as they have seen the results in their own patients. Impi contains plants such as the African cucumis, African gladiolus, a species of Aloe with proven anti-viral properties, licorice root and other medicinal plants.

Dosage: one or two capsules per day with a full glass of water in the morning with breakfast and one capsule at supper with a full glass of water. This product can be ordered from [www.NileValleyMedicine.com](http://www.NileValleyMedicine.com).

### **Mela-Immune Anti-AIDS formula**

**Mela-Immune** is a potent anti-AIDS formula, and it enhances and protects the human immune system at all levels, without any of the side effects of pharmaceutical drugs prescribed to AIDS victims. Mela-immune was developed using African herbal science and have shown positive results against the HIV virus. The prime therapeutic application is to use herbs and roots which stimulates the production of T-4 helper cells, protect the immune system from the HIV-AIDS virus, and to treat the AIDS Related Conditions (ARC) such as Kaposi's Sarcoma, skin tumors, chills, night sweats, the Shingles, and pneumonia (PCP). An interesting benefit of Mela-immune is its ability to neutralize free radicals, cancers and tumors, liver disease, urinary tract diseases, inflamed joints (rheumatoid arthritis), infections, colds, flus, and high blood pressure. For this we use the following herbs:

Melatonin1 tablet (5 grams)  
African Potato (*Hypoxis rooperi*)2 capsules  
Turmeric root2 capsules  
Reishi mushroom2 capsules  
Astragalus root2 capsules  
Neem tree bark2 capsules  
American Ginseng2 capsules  
Hyssop2 capsules  
St. John's Wort2 capsules  
Dandelion root2 capsules  
Cayenne2 capsules  
Echinacea2 capsules  
Licorice root2 capsules

I am dedicating a lengthy discussion to the use of this anti-AIDS formula because of its great therapeutic benefit as a treatment and cure for AIDS. Part of the reason is that most of the main herbs in the formula contain either melanin or melanin derivatives which is conducive to neutralizing the HIV-AIDS virus in the body. There are several scientific reports which have demonstrated melanin's resistance to the AIDS virus.

**Melanin:**

Melanin is the brown, or black substance which is naturally found in the skin of humans. The melanin molecule has shown to have numerous healing and regenerative properties in the human body.

Dr. Pookrum, in a speech titled, "Melanin...The Basics", stated that there is also a relationship between the immune system and melanin, especially in black people. She indicates that experiments have been done which show that any tissue that has been washed with melanin and then inoculated with the AIDS virus cannot be infected. The virus that is said to be the cause of AIDS cannot penetrate the melaninated cells. She says that a synthetic melanin is going to be one of the first line of drugs to kill the retrovirus responsible for AIDS. Drug companies and biochemists are doing all kinds of research regarding melanin and AIDS. This link between melanin and the AIDS virus prompted me to research for plants in nature that could produce the same or similar effects as melanin in the blood stream. This idea served as a jumping-off point for the testing of several herbal combinations.

According to an article published in 1994 in

"Earthly Goods", John Burley, a British-born botanist, was hired by the University of Illinois to gather rare plants for the National Cancer Institute (NCI). In 1987 he roamed Sarawak's tropical forests for weeks, being an expert on Asian flora, in that time gathering 136 different plant species. The amount of various specimens being processed by NCI at that time meant that it was not until 1991 that Burley's plant specimens were extracted and tested. An extract from one of his tree samples, a single tree termed "*Calophyllum lanigerum*" which had not been known before, rang "all the bells and whistles on the AIDS screen." It protected human cells from the AIDS virus, and was not influenced by the many mutations that the AIDS virus develops. The compound that did this, one of eight isolated from the tree, was unique: the NCI called it "calanolide A."

They had finally found what they were looking for - a brand new treatment for AIDS and they needed more of the tree *Calophyllum* right away. So in 1992 more collectors were dispatched to Sarawak to bring back more samples and locate more of these trees. But on some day between 1987 and 1992, the deforesters had clear-cut the area; all that was left was a lifeless stump. Nor could any more

trees of that type be found. Other trees, which were botanical relations of *Calophyllum lanigerum*, were sampled and tested, but they had no AIDS-inhibiting effect. Part of the name of the tree species "lanigerum" is from the latin plant word for "black" (nigerum). We can see that it is related to the melanin molecule in its color and make up. This further supports the theory that melanin is the key component to a cure to the AIDS virus.

Melanin is found not only in the skin, hair, eyes, and organs of the human body, but is found in many of our foods and plants - apples, mushrooms, eggplant, bananas and greens. It is also found in animals, in the soil, in the bark and roots of trees. Melanin is a large, complicated and complex living molecule. It has a very high molecular weight of over 200, meaning that one molecule of melanin is composed of a three dimensional configuration of over

200 atoms (see Diagram 6: Breakdown of the Bio-chemistry of Melanin). It is a living molecule, a life chemical, and it is charged like a battery. In fact, it operates like a battery, or super-conductor, yet it is heat resistant. it is because of this superconductivity quality that

makes the melanin molecule resistant to the AIDS virus.

For instance, on the molecular level the electrons in melanin molecules orbit and rearrange themselves. They undergo what is called "resonance". This rearrangement of electrons causes certain double bonds to shift their position to sites in the molecule that are low in energy. In addition, the melanin molecule has two poles as in a battery. The energy particle enters the molecule at the positive pole. The shifting of the double bonds will continue until a stable area is found within the structure. This bond shifting characteristic is responsible for protecting the body's blood cells and tissues from the AIDS virus. Thus the melanin molecule creates a protective energy field containing the mutation of the AIDS retrovirus.

#### **African Potato:**

One of the oldest therapeutic healing herbs used by traditional African doctors is the tuber *Hypoxis rooperi*, or the "African Potato" as it is usually called. It has been found to be genetically over 300,000 years old. It is from this plant that the discovery of sterols and sterolins emanates and how their properties boost the human immune system. This is a vital

breakthrough because no remedy has ever been found to safely activate the body's T-cells. Today, sterols and sterolins are still the most sought after and preferred immune system booster. The Zulu, Shangaan, Manyika and southern African tribes used the African Potato for its medicinal properties to treat cancer and tumors, chronic fatigue syndrome, coronary diseases, HIV-AIDS, lupus, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, TB, and viral infections (including colds and flus).

### **Curcumin (Turmeric)**

Curcumin, an ancient spice in the ginger family, also known as turmeric root, dates back to the time of Egyptian pharaohs and Indian rajas more than 6,000 years ago. Curcumin has been used by traditional herbal medicine for liver disease, indigestion, urinary tract infections, blood purification, inflamed joints (rheumatoid arthritis), insect bites, and skin diseases. Although the chemical structure of curcumin was determined in 1910, it was only during the mid 1970s and 1980s that the potential uses of curcuminoids in medicine began to study its ability to retard some of the progress of the virus that causes AIDS. For example, curcumin has demonstrated, *in vivo*,

its ability to inhibit the HIV-1 "integrase protein". Therefore, this integrase inhibition may contribute to the anti-HIV activity of curcumin, which currently is in clinical trials for AIDS patients. Here is some AIDS background as to why curcumin may have this benefit:

CD-4 and CD-8 cells are acronyms for the immune cells called T-lymphocytes, which are responsible for some of the most sophisticated activity of the immune system. The T-lymphocytes function to regulate the entire immune response. With regard to this regulatory function, the T-lymphocytes can be divided into T-helpers and T-suppressors. The T-helpers stimulate the immune response to provide protection against invading microorganisms. The function of T-suppressors is to stop this action when appropriate - for example, at the point at which infection has been overcome in order to avoid being turned against the body itself. Balanced interaction between T-helper and T-suppressor cells represents self-regulation of the immune response. Self-regulation is regarded as the most crucial aspect of this response.

In HIV infection and AIDS, T-helper cells become a primary target of the infection,

becoming increasingly incapacitated and destroyed by the virus. The current definition of AIDS includes HIV infection with T-helper (CD-4) cell counts lower than 200 per milliliter of blood. This immune system is usually unable to defend the body against various viral, bacterial and parasitic infections. The microorganisms take advantage of the weakened defense system and invade the body. Therefore, those infections are referred to as opportunistic infections. HIV cannot live without being fully integrated in the live body cell. The enzyme integrase facilitates integration of the virus genetic material with the genetic material in the cell. The genetic material of the cell begins to serve the virus, not the cell.

Curcumin was found to inhibit the activity of integrase, potentially preventing HIV from finding a home in CD-4 and CD-8 cells. In a study, the administration of 2,000 mg of curcumin given to 18 HIV-infected patients for approximately 20 weeks resulted in a significant increase in the CD-4 and CD-8 cell counts, as compared with the placebo-receiving patients. The CD-4 cell count before the treatment ranged from 5 to 615 cells per ml of blood, and the respective range after treatment was 283 to 1,467 cells/ml of blood. Another benefit of curcumin is its anti-cancer and tumor effect.

(Inhibition of Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type-1 Integrase by Curcumin, Mazumder, A 1995, Biochem Pharmacol 1165-1170).

### **Reishi Mushroom (*Ganoderma lucidum*):**

Since ancient times over 2000 years, Reishi mushroom (also known as "lingzhi" in China) has been known to Asian culture for its miraculous health enhancing benefits, and employed by oriental doctors for centuries. The first Chinese Emperor called it "the herb of deathlessness." Lingzhi is said to mean "divine herb that energizes the "chi" or "life force". Emperors of ancient periods called it the "Elixir of Immortality, Herb of Spiritual Potency." Recent research, analysis and clinical experiments have shown Reishi's ability to aid the body's natural immune system to strengthen itself at the cellular level, improving energy and vigor, metabolism, body rejuvenation, increasing brain alertness and promoting a good night's sleep. Reishi mushroom also has powerful immunological properties and continues to be used with great success to raise the T4-helper immune cells of AIDS victims as well as lowering cholesterol which benefits the heart and circulation, helping chronic lung

problems, reducing tumors in cancer victims, improving energy and the immune system generally while inducing a more peaceful inner state.

### **Astragalus root**

Astragalus root has been used by Traditional African doctors to increase the body's energy and strengthen the body's resistance to disease. Astragalus balances the energy of all the internal organs. It helps neutralize fevers, infections, and improves digestion. It is widely known for its use in AIDS treatment, and as an adjunctive with chemotherapy and radiation. Astragalus is combined with other herbs to promote their effects.

### **Neem bark:**

For thousands of years, traditional African doctors in West Africa used the neem bark to cure a host of ailments threatening human health. According to a study in 1995, the neem tree was shown to have anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties. It is the source of a unique natural substance called "Azadirachta indica", which possesses stimulating properties which enhance the body's immune system.

### **American Ginseng**

Ginseng (*Panax Quinquefolium*) is one of the most effective tonic herbs in Asia, because it has the ability to improve digestion and energy, and protect the immune system from infections of all types. Ginseng improves regulation and promotion of energy to the trillions of cells in the body during periods of physiological or psychological stress. It stimulates the body's immune defenses, providing greater resistance against AIDS related ailments such as night sweats, thirst, dry cough, and TB.

### **Hyssop**

A member of the mint family, hyssop has been used by herbalists since antiquity. Hyssop has a history of medicinal use as old as the Bible. Recent studies show that hyssop serve as a potent weapon in the modern fight against HIV-AIDS. The investigation into hyssop's anti-AIDS properties began after a female drug addict infected with the AIDS arrived for treatment at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, New York. The woman had also contracted Karposi's sarcoma - a deadly cancer characterized by bluish-red lesions that frequently develops in people who have AIDS. The woman was finally released, and a check up

one year later, revealed that the woman's skin lesions had improved "significantly" and she was feeling "much better" according to the doctors at North Shore University Hospital. The doctors were mystified by the woman's improvement.

However, the mystery was solved when the woman's mother told researchers her daughter had been drinking an old Jamaican tea remedy made from hyssop and a few other Caribbean herbs. Western doctors weren't used to seeing Karposi's sarcoma get better. In fact, as the woman continued to drink her tea, the Karposi's sarcoma continued to regress up until the time of her death from AIDS-related pneumonia. The team's lab work, published in a leading medical journal, seems to confirm hyssop's preliminary promise. Studies done with tissue cultures in the laboratory showed that hyssop was very effective as an antiviral, and anti-HIV treatment in human controlled tests. Hyssop's leaves and flowers contain a volatile oil that gives it a bitter taste and strong odor. That's one thing generally common to African herbs. Other uses of hyssop include treating coughs, colds, fevers, herpes, and the shingles.

### **St. John's Wort**

St. John's Wort has been used in herbal medicine for over 2,000 years. Ancient herbalists found that St. John's Wort contained antiviral, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. One study at New York University found that St. John's Wort has dramatic action against HIV-AIDS. AIDS patients have reported positive results using the herb, and a study sanctioned by the Food and Drug Administration is under way, testing the effects of some of the herb's constituents in people who have AIDS.

Since early 1989, according to AIDS Treatment News, "almost all the reports we have heard from users have been good." New studies suggest that, the chemical component of St. John's Wort, "hypericin" is the active inhibitor of the AIDS virus. St. John's Wort tastes initially sweet, then bitter and astringent. People with AIDS say the herb is effective in treating the AIDS related condition called the shingles.

### **Dandelion Root**

The bitter principles in Dandelion root makes it one of the best remedies for the treatment of hepatitis, cancer, and blood purification. According to traditional African

healers, Dandelion root is a liver cleanser, a diuretic, and is thus cleansing and clearing to the kidneys and bladder. Dandelion has shown to be useful as an adjunctive treatment for AIDS and cancer.

### **Cayenne Pepper**

Cayenne also known as African Bird Pepper, tonifies the adrenals and drives circulation. It quickly arouses the defense systems to throw off the invading factors causing infections and disease. In combination with the other herbs, cayenne is very effective in preserving the body's vitality. Dr. John Christopher, one of the fathers of herbal medicine in the United States, was an ardent promoter of this herb. Native Americans used it for treating infections, particularly respiratory and sinus conditions. Because of Cayenne's ability to stimulate circulation, it is excellent for treating the chills (cold extremities), another AIDS related condition.

### **Echinacea**

Used traditionally to treat snakebite, as a pain reliever, and blood purifier, echinacea root has been used extensively by herbalists around the world, and has been found to have immunostimulation, antiviral, wound-healing, and anti-

inflammatory properties. Due to its insulin component, which increases a serum globulin called "properidin", echinacea promotes the neutralization of immune complexes, viruses, and bacteria.

Echinacea also causes T-cell activation, switching on the whole arm of cell-mediated immunity: attacking foreign invaders, anti-body binding, and natural killer cell activity. Because echinacea stimulates helper T cells, this in turn, produces the interferon that causes the production of an intracellular protein that inhibits HIV viral RNA transcription. Echinacea has some anti-tumor activity due to its content of (Z)-1-8-pentadecadiene.

### **Licorice root**

Licorice root stimulates the production of interferon, which leads to significant antiviral activity and produces activation of macrophages and enhanced natural killer cell activity in the body. It also inhibits RNA and DNA viruses (such as the AIDS retrovirus), including herpes simplex (shingles), malaria, and general infections. Like ginseng, Licorice root prevents shrinking of the thymus gland and immuno-suppression caused by stress and antibiotic medications. It clears inflammations and drug

poisoning, relieves pain, and balances all 12 organ meridians in the body. Licorice root is used by traditional African doctors as a major harmonizing ingredient to alleviate the bitterness of other herbs in a formula.

Method of administration: The smallest dose should be two "oo" capsules of each herb. This formula is taken three times daily before or during meals. To enhance its therapeutic efficiency, each day the patient should gradually increase the dosage of melatonin (from 5 grams to 40 grams) daily over a period of 15 days or up to 6 months. For instance, each day that the formula is taken, the patient will increase the dosage of the melatonin tablets (each tablet is 5 grams) until 8 tablets of melatonin are taken with the formula daily. The concept of this program is to inoculate the body against the HIV virus by washing the cells, blood stream, organs, and tissues with the melanin molecule (melatonin converts into melanin), while at the same time regenerating and increasing T-4 helper cells in the body. The herbs should be drank with a full glass of water. Other strong medicines should be avoided as much as possible. For any possible side effects such as sleepiness, or a burning sensation, a cold water bath is recommended. Cooling energies such as

pearls or flowers and herbs of Oshun can be worn. After taking the herbal cocktail, the patient should drink some green tea.

The diet should consist of wheat, rice, vegetables, and grains. A macrobiotic diet would be ideal for this program. One should avoid sugar, white flour products, excessive travel, sleeping during the day, pastries, staying awake late at night, and sexual intercourse. I can only say that I have personally prescribed this formula on some of my patients and have seen dramatic success in checking the AIDS retrovirus. Patients have regained complete health and vigor with no harmful side effects. My theory is the AIDS virus cannot fully thrive in the melanized blood environment. By flooding the blood and cells with enough melatonin, eventually the AIDS virus is neutralized. Although we do not know the exact nature of why the AIDS virus cannot live in the presence of melanin, it is quite evident that melanin neutralizes harmful entities. (The Science of Melanin (1995), by T.O.Moore, Knowledge Seekers, Lithonia, GA.).

Considering the biochemical constituents in each herb cannot adequately describe the action of the formula "in vivo" in a living body. So,

there is a problem with relying solely on plant chemistry to explain the healing action of herbs. Furthermore, when herbs are combined in a formula, the whole is not always equal to the sum of its parts, as Dr. Tierra used to say. Dr. Tierra once explained to me that when we make an herbal formula using several herbs together, we are literally creating therapeutic properties that cannot be found in nature. This includes taste, energy, color, weight, texture, properties and growing location of the plants.

**ORISHA  
SELF-ASSESSMENT**



## Orisha Self-Assessment Diagnostic Charts

T

he following Orisha Diagnostic Chart system is designed to help you identify how the seven major orishas act and interact within you. According to this African science, various conditions of distress and disease are linked to each orisha mode, or frequency. This system of orisha and ajogun (evil energy) relations also describe the spiritual and emotional forces in the inner and outer world of the human consciousness and astral body.

According to the Ifa Corpus, all balance and imbalances in the mind, body, and spirit are ordered according to the seven major orisha modes of:

- **Obatala**
- **Elegba**
- **Yemoja**
- **Oshun**

- **Ogun**
- **Shango**
- **Oya**

These orishas represent attributes of transformation, energy, vibrations, sound, spirit, and polarities of negative and positive. They also correspond with the 12 planetary influences, anatomy, physiology, pathologies, and physical and mental afflictions. Each orisha internal performs a function in nature. By deciphering their relationships, we may arrive at an understanding of the divine language, the will and intention they express, and the purpose of, or lesson in which the Creator has been trying to impress in us throughout our lives.

### **The Yoruba Philosophy of Disease**

All disease, or negative energy, whether in the world, or in ourselves, is a message of the orisha spirits bearing a gift. To make a simple example, when our shoe doesn't fit right we feel pain. That pain is simply a signal telling us to do something about our shoe. It's actually a beneficial message, signaling to us that some part of our body is hurting and that a change needs to be made. That's what pain is: **Pain is pressure to change in some way.**

All of life is continually changing in order to stay in accord with the cosmic and environmental forces. Otherwise, life and its environment would soon grow into chaos. Pain is the mechanism causing this continual adjustment so that we come together. This is the **Law of Duality** set in motion throughout the Universe by the Self Existent Being.

When we are talking about balance, we are dealing with spiritual ideas which means dealing with the abstract, and most people do not want to put forth the effort required for this. Without the mind, body, and spirit in balance, your life will not run smoothly. Be warned: balance is not a constant thing. No one ever stays in perfect balance. If you did, you would no longer inhabit the physical body. Constant perfect balance would be a "static" condition; the laws of the Universe do not allow static conditions to exist. Universal laws break down static conditions, reforming the energy into new forms. This law also applies to our individual lives, giving us a chance to change static conditions in our personal lives.

What happens when we open up dimensions of consciousness? What if we allow ourselves to explore the possibility that things

are linked together in ways that we never thought were connected. Now-a-days, we're finding more and more support, even from psychology, for these kind of shifts in awareness.

Whenever pain or disease gets great enough, the orisha internals turn our attention to it. That's the general first step in dealing with our ailment -- we turn our gaze upon it. Not with condemnation -- that's still not seeing it yet. What allows us to see the pain clearly is a gaze of acceptance, a letting go of our resistance to experiencing it.

Second, we look at what our orisha is trying to tell us. Why is this pain, or disease here? What is it signaling? What is the gift it's trying to give me? In the case of the tight shoe, for instance, the pain is trying to tell us that something needs to be done. Once we get the message, we act on it as best we can. Maybe we go home and change shoes if we can. If we can't, maybe we learn about focusing in on pain with compassion.

Third, we redirect our attention back to a positive focus, incorporating the lesson of the disease. We might make a mental note to be more careful about the size when we buy new

shoes; in this way our life tends toward greater harmony. If that message got through, for instance, we're more likely to have well-fitting shoes for the rest of our life.

Our orishas will send us a gift in different things in different situations. To one cancer patient, it might come as a call to a new type of diet and lifestyle; to another it might come as a message to let go of lifelong "bitterness" and heal "old wounds". But our orisha internals will make the message known if we earnestly look for it.

There are lots of ways to do this. We might consult our inner intuitive guidance, the message of the heart. Or we might seek advice from a Yoruba priest, or herbalist. We can also chant a prayer or mantra to the spiritual forces to deliver the message. We can pay attention to our dreams, which contain rich and symbolic messages normally blocked from our waking mind.

### **How to Assess Your Orisha Imbalances**

One can be impressed by a definite feeling, or manifestation by the orisha internals. Each orisha evokes a definite sequence of emotions, signs, and symptoms which can be felt in the

body. The orisha internals are vibratory forces which can convey the attributes of the orishas, as a poet does by words in evoking certain emotions and feelings in the body. In this way, the orisha reveal the impact of distress upon the whole person.

Various things can cause disruption of the orisha internals. The primary causes are:

1. Wrong diet
2. Negative thoughts
3. Congestion, or blocked aganyu (life force)
4. Lack of essential elements in the body  
(you cannot successfully correct this cause until your diet has changed)
5. Spiritual imbalance

The Yoruba healer when making an orisha diagnosis, observes the "signs" and "symptoms" of the patient to determine the nature of the mis-alignment at hand. He senses all impressions to make a diagnosis. This may be spiritual, physical, or emotional.

While it may be quite easy for a Yoruba priest to diagnose an individual based on the

dominant orisha imbalance in the body during a disease state, whether the symptoms characteristic to one or more orisha internals are involved. It is by no means so easy for a novice to determine the particular orisha herbal directives which will polarize, neutralize, or ameliorate physical symptoms. For, as we have discussed in previous chapters, there are extreme poles of any particular orisha, or perhaps more than one involved in a mis-alignment.

One way of applying orisha diagnosis has been simply to equate pathology with orisha energy modes -- "signs" and "symptoms" alone are then the basis of diagnosing a disease pattern. Within this reasoning, the orisha channels in which you have the most symptoms becomes synonymous with the orisha out of balance. For example, if your "signs" are Disturbances of Digestion, and "symptoms" are Indigestion and Heart Burn, all these problems are associated with Oshun- Orisha. So, you are considered to have a mis-alignment of Oshun. You would then look under the "Orisha Therapy Chart" for the particular treatment of that orisha mode.

Sometimes symptoms often appear not only

in one orisha mode, but in two or more, those in conflict with the dominant orisha which is giving us trouble. In this case, if you show symptoms in more than one orisha mode, one should treat those orishas as well. Using the above example, if in addition to having "symptoms" of Indigestion and Heart Burn, you also have "symptoms" of Constipation (Shango), you will treat both orisha modes simultaneously.

Harmony is restored when the appropriate therapeutic measures of tonifying, or purging, dispersing, or consolidating are applied to ease conflict and correct equilibrium between the orishas. Using these principles, it may be necessary to either follow tonification or detoxification in succession or use a single formula that will accomplish both at the same time.

### **Using the Orisha Charts**

Below is an Orisha Self-Assessment Diagnostic Chart System which is designed to help you identify which orisha internals are out of phase within you. Read each orisha column under "Signs" and "Symptoms". If one or more orisha columns strongly typifies you, make a note of them. When you are finished, and have

determined the particular orishas which fit your "signs" and "symptoms", then go to the "Orisha Therapy Chart" and match the appropriate herbs and tonics under the orisha column that reflect your orisha diagnosis. Do the orisha Diagnostic Chart before you look at the therapy section so that you are not biased in your evaluation.

The charts are a starting point from which to acquire the means to preserve, or recover health. It can also guide you in the use of therapies such as medicinal herb formulas, and tonics which you will find throughout this book.

Important note: Self-treatment with the orisha diagnostic charts is not intended as a substitute for qualified professional medical care. This is especially true when attempting to treat serious life threatening diseases.

Central nervous system disorders	Disorders of sexual precocity Disorders of sleep patterns Hormone disorders	Cardiovascular diseases Sleep disturbances Disturbances of thinking, speech and emotions
Disorder of white fluids A the body	Weight and appetite disorders	Collagen deterioration (lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis)
Spiritual disequilibrium	Body temperature disorders	Immune system function
Diseases of the spinal column, bones, teeth, and joints	Water and fluid imbalances Neurological diseases Spiritual imbalances Disorder of the adrenals	
Symptoms		

**Table 8**

#### ORISHA DIAGNOSTIC CHART

Obatala	Elegba	Ogun
Signs		

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Forgetfulness	Extreme loss of weight	
Epilepsy, and violent seizures	Diabetes	Heart attack, stroke
Hysteria and mania	insipidas	Blood in urine, stool, or sputum, High blood pressure,
Meningitis	Insomnia, and restlessness	Excessive perspiration
Motor coordination problems	Stress and tension	Irregular rate and Rhythm & in the heart, Pain in Chest
Spinal intimations	Lack of breast milk	Restlessness, acne, pimples, hives, eczema, boils, psoriasis, athlete's foot,
Insanity	Disease of the skin pigment, irritation, aches and pains,	
Drug addictions	Agitation of the spirit	Pain in the muscles, and Tendons, HIV and AIDS, Childhood diabetes
Cerebral congestion	Nerve problems	
Neuralgia	Susceptibility to colds and flus and infections	
Multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy	Arthritis	
Thinning, or loss of head hair		

Diagnostic Section

Oshun

Shango

Signs	
	Disorders of waste elimination, Male reproductive disorders, Bone marrow diseases, Congestion, blockage, weakness of life force, Stiffness, growth and development or tension of the which include problems of spine, neck, and fertility, conception, and colon
	Emotional suppression, or inhibitions
Disturbances of digestion and assimilation, Imbalances of lymphatic circulation, Disorder of fluid circulation or viscosity, Disorders of the blood and veins, Disorders of force, growth and development or tension of the which include problems of spine, neck, and fertility, conception, and colon	Constipation
Disturbances of digestion and assimilation, Imbalances of lymphatic circulation, Disorder of fluid circulation or viscosity, Disorders of the blood and veins, Disorders of force, growth and development or tension of the which include problems of spine, neck, and fertility, conception, and colon	Asthma (dam to weak chi), excreting of turbid matter, or gas, Unpleasant stiffness of the body, lack of energy
Disturbances of digestion and assimilation, Imbalances of lymphatic circulation, Disorder of fluid circulation or viscosity, Disorders of the blood and veins, Disorders of force, growth and development or tension of the which include problems of spine, neck, and fertility, conception, and colon	Nervous disorders
Disturbances of digestion and assimilation, Imbalances of lymphatic circulation, Disorder of fluid circulation or viscosity, Disorders of the blood and veins, Disorders of force, growth and development or tension of the which include problems of spine, neck, and fertility, conception, and colon	Dizziness and nausea
Disturbances of digestion and assimilation, Imbalances of lymphatic circulation, Disorder of fluid circulation or viscosity, Disorders of the blood and veins, Disorders of force, growth and development or tension of the which include problems of spine, neck, and fertility, conception, and colon	Changing emotional patterns
Disturbances of digestion and assimilation, Imbalances of lymphatic circulation, Disorder of fluid circulation or viscosity, Disorders of the blood and veins, Disorders of force, growth and development or tension of the which include problems of spine, neck, and fertility, conception, and colon	Arthritic pains

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	Pain in lower abdomen and groin	Coughing Shortness of breath Varicose veins  Excess mucous and phlegm Susceptibility to colds and flus  Slow healing of the skin Nasal congestion asthma	Nausea Pain in the lower abdomen and groin area  Pain under the ribs Frequent anger and short temper  Irregular menses Pains in the eyes and ears Migraines and irritability Disorder of the genitals  Pain in the breasts, buttocks, prostate, testes, and ovaries Tiredness after rest
Diagnostic section			
Oya	Yemoja		
Signs			
Pulmonary and respiratory diseases  Disorder of the skin and mucus membrane  Allergies Disturbances of fluid circulation  Disorders of blood vessel circulation	Moving pain, or swelling Spasms of the muscles, nerves, and organs, cramps and tension Imbalances due to erratic and irregular function  Derangement of peripheral nerves and circulation Imbalances of coordination, locomotion, and equilibrium		
Symptoms			

**ORISHA THERAPY CHART**

Obatala	Elegba
Therapies	
	<u><a href="#">Extreme loss of weight:</a></u> Dong Quai/Ginseng combined, cod liver oil
<u><a href="#">Forgetfulness:</a></u> Ginkgo biloba extract, Ginseng tea	<u><a href="#">Diabetes insipidus:</a></u> Guava tea, Red Panax ginseng extract, Bilberry leaf tea, Blueberry leaves uva ursi, Huckleberry leaf
<u><a href="#">Epilepsy, and violent seizure:</a></u> Passion flower, Lady's slipper's, Belladonna	
<u><a href="#">Hysteria and Mania:</a></u>	

<u><a href="#">Spirit Possession formula</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Raspberry leaves, Cat's claw bark</a></u>
<u><a href="#">Motor coordination problems:</a></u> Black cohosh, Valerian root	<u><a href="#">Insomnia, and restlessness:</a></u> Valerian root tea, Chamomile tea
<u><a href="#">Neuralgia:</a></u> Mullein flowers, Ginger Evening Primrose,	<u><a href="#">Scullcap</a></u>
Chamomile Yellow jasmin,	<u><a href="#">Stress and tension:</a></u> Camphor, Valerian root and mint tea
Guarana seeds	<u><a href="#">Disease of the skin pigment:</a></u> African Shea butter
<u><a href="#">Thinning, or loss of head hair:</a></u> Tea tree oil	Black soap
Ho Shou Wu (Fo-ti)	Melatonin Yellow dock
Nettles, Shavegrass, Horsetail Dried dates	Sarsaparilla root
<u><a href="#">Drug Addiction:</a></u> Ibogaine, Mullein (smoked) Peppermint (smoked) Cloves (Smoked)	<u><a href="#">Agitation of the spirit</a></u> Angelica/Jujube extract, Valerian root tea
<u><a href="#">Nerve pains</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Colds, flus, infections</a></u>
Henbane	Cayenne pepper
Chamomile	
Valerian root	

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	Anti-plague formula, Cloves, Bayberry Hyssop
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**ORISHA THERAPY CHART**

Ogun	Oshun
Therapies	
	<u>Stomach distension and gas</u>
<u>Heart attack, stroke:</u> Angelica Jujube extract, Ginkgo biloba Yohimbe Cayenne African Nutritional Factor	Golden seal Chamomile Barley sprouts Bay leaves Muira Puama bark Pau D' Arco bark
<u>Blood in urine, stool, or sputum:</u> Cayenne pepper	Agrimony <u>Indigestion and heart burn:</u>
High blood pressure: Garlic Dong qui Yohimbe ginseng tea Ginkgo biloba tea Eucalyptus oil	Citrus peel Catnip Peppermint ginger sage fennel Devil's claw

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Cayenne	<u>Loss of appetite, or overeating:</u> Green tea	<u>Pain in the muscles, and tendons:</u> Valerian root extract	
Vervain	Ginger	Camphor	
Hyssop	Chamomile	Eucalyptus oil	
African Nutritional Factor	Marjoram	Ginger	<u>Cancer and tumors</u>
<u>Irregular heart beat:</u>	Golden seal	Garden sage	Reishi mushroom
Red Panax ginseng	Hypoxis Rooperi	Clover	Black seed
Ginkgo biloba	<u>Loose stools:</u>	Spearmint	Saw Palmetto
Garlic Kola Nuts	Linseed/flax seed	<u>Weakened Immune system:</u>	Cat's claw bark
Quinine bark	Cascara root	Astragalus root cordyceps	Chuchuhuasi bark
<u>Restlessness</u>	Cayenne		Mbulali
Valerian root Ginkgo biloba Chamomile tea	Blackberry		
<u>Skin problems:</u>	<u>Anemia due to malnutrition</u>		
Golden seal, tea tree oil Black seed, Clay soap, shea	Cod liver oil		
Butter, Olive oil, Aloe vera Sarsaparilla root	Dong Qui Yellow dock		
	Oregan grape root		
	Green leaf vegetables		

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Cayenne pepper	African Nutritional Factor
Solomon's seal	Chapparal
Hypoxis	Pau D' Arco
Rooperi (AIDS, HIV)	<u>Infertility, impotence, genetic impairments, and miscarriage:</u> Angelica Jujube extract (women)
Impi (AIDS, HIV)	Cramp Bark (women)
Cat's claw (AIDS, HIV)	Cramp Bark (men)
Reishi Mushroom (AID,HIV, Cancer)	Goldenseal
<u>Childhood Diabetes</u>	Red Raspberry leaves (women) Damiana (men)
Bilberry leaf	Siberian ginseng (men)
Jambul	Saw Palmetto (men) Maca root
Cherry stone juniper Ginseng and Rehmannia	

**ORISHA THERAPY CHART**

Yemoja
Therapies
<u>Moving pain, or swelling:</u>
Honey
Devil's claw
Yucca
Kava Kava
Wintergreen
Mulberry twigs
<u>Spasms of the muscles, nerves, and organs, cramps, and tensions:</u>
Tea tree oil
Henbane
Chamomile, Wild yam
<u>Pain in the breasts, buttocks, prostate, testes, and ovaries:</u>
Pau D' Arco bark
Honeysuckle flower (breasts)
Saw Palmetto, Cramp bark
Marshmallow, Juniper berries Gravel root

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Blue cohosh,fennel Sassafras	False Unicorn (women) Squawvine (women)
<u>Irregular menses:</u>	<u>Tireness after rest:</u>
Lady's Mantle,Ginkgo,Cramp bark extract	Red Panax ginseng extract Catuabe bark
Dong qui Rehmannia	Kola nut Siberian ginseng
<u>Migraines and irritability:</u>	<u>Disorder of the nervous system:</u> Wild yam
Chamomile, Feverfew,Holy thistle,Pennyroyal	Black cohosh Rue
Vervain, Rosemary Ginger Marjoram	Wild lettuce
<u>Disorder of the genitals:</u>	Lily of the Valley
Yohimbe	Chamomile, Lady's slippers
Red Raspberry leaf Deng Qui	
Damiana Angelica root Goldenseal	

ORISHA THERAPY CHART

Shango	Oya
Therapies	
	<u>Coughing, fevers:</u> Angelica Jujube extract Hyssop
	Myrrh Comfrey root Red sage
	Mulberry leaves Coltsfoot flower
	<u>Shortness of breath:</u> Ginkgo biloba Camphor
	Coltsfoot flower Lungwort
<u>Constipation:</u> Cascara extract Castor oil Rhubarb root Chai seeds Senna Horehound Flaxseed	<u>Excess Mucous and phlegm:</u> Horehound
Aloes Cerasee	Violet leaves
<u>Asthma:</u>	Mulberry leaves
Yucca Coltsfoot Mullein Thyme Hyssop Comfrey Black seeds Cat's Claw	Comfrey

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<p><u>Excreting of turbid matter, or gas:</u></p> <p>Peppermint oil Cascara sagrada Goldenseal, Aloe, Butter root Senna Agrimony</p> <p><u>No Energy</u></p> <p>Ginseng Barley malt Cayenne Catuaba Honey</p>	<p><u>Susceptibility to colds, flus, and allergies:</u></p> <p>Cayenne Astragalus root Peppermint oil Anti-plague formula Echinacea</p> <p><u>Slow healing of the skin:</u></p> <p>Tea tree oil Goldenseal African shea butter Liver and More Herbal tea</p> <p><u>Asthma:</u></p> <p>Cramp bark Peppermint oil Comfrey root Mullein Hyssop Sage Elecampane</p>	<p><u>Nervous Disorders:</u></p> <p>Valerian root extract St. John's Wort's Goto Kola Scullcap</p> <p><u>Arthritic pains:</u></p> <p>Buckthorn Black cohosh Alfalfa Chaparral Burdock Chuchthasi bark</p> <p><u>Male reproductive Problems:</u></p> <p>Yohimbe Traditional African Manback Cubeb Berries Muira Puama Catuaba bark Siberian ginseng Damiana</p> <p><u>Changing Emotional patterns:</u></p>
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Gotu Kola  
St. John's wort  
Valerian root  
Diarrhea Guarana seeds  
Chuchthiasi bark  
Coconut oil

## THE SCIENCE OF AFRICAN BIO-CHEMISTRY

### **A Nutritional Guide for Healing, Diet, and Well-Being**

#### **T**

here are differences in body physiology between the races of Mankind. Every human has a specific biochemical make up, and, therefore, requires a unique biochemical diet in order to stay healthy and free from disease.

Nature has programmed every human body-type with certain food parameters which helps to prevent damage to the biochemical and nutritional homeostasis (balance). Ancient African health practitioners taught that the human body has a vital force (aura, electromagnetic field) that allows one type of vitamin to change into another type of vitamin/or energy.

It is important to understand that energy is

the basic unit of the human body. It is the foundation upon which all the cells, organs, tissues, and chemicals are formed in the body. The body emits a vibratory frequency which reflects the thoughts, foods, and medicines we ingest which contributes to the structure of our vital force.

This year, 9,000 African Americans will die from heart disease, 5,600 from breast cancer, 6,100 from prostate cancer, and 6,800 from colon cancer. More than two million African Americans - 1 in 10 have diabetes. About 70 thousand African Americans have Sickle Cell Anemia, and each year about one out of every four hundred black infants are born with it.

The purpose of the following chapter is to show that this great human tragedy in our communities CAN BE STOPPED NOW entirely on the basis of existing nutritional health knowledge. We will explore the theory that cancer, heart disease, and sickle cell anemia is a deficiency disease aggravated by the lack of an essential food compounds in African people's diet, and that its control is to be found simply in restoring this nutrient in our daily diet.

### **The Western View of Health and Disease**

The average doctor today under the Western system of medicine has spent over ten years acquiring training to learn about disease causation. Hence, there is a tendency among many physicians to look for a positive "cause-and-effect" relationship in which something clearly causes something else - a virus, or bacteria must "cause" a disease. The idea that disease is caused by an outside agency, or virus is rooted in the Germ Theory of disease, first proposed by the French scientist, Louis Pasteur in the mid-1800's.

There are many diseases that plague the human family today which modern science has spent many billions of dollars searching for a prevention or cure, but they are little closer to the answers today than they were over a hundred years ago. Perhaps the main reason is that they are still looking for that "something" which causes these diseases instead of the "lack" of something.

The ultimate solution to the scientist's most puzzling medical problem is to be found in an ancient concoction of herbs and foods. However, medical doctors have been trained to search for "complex" answers rather than looking to the simple laws of nature. As Dr.

Laila Africa, pioneer of African ethno-medicine put it aptly:

"In health science they (Western doctors) believe that the body destroys itself with disease. Therefore, they must give toxic poisonous drugs and vaccines to stop the body from killing itself. In caucasian medical science, they believe that evil bacteria and virus are trying to kill good bacteria and virus."

### African Health Science

The African system of health disagrees with the idea of germs being the sole source of disease. Historically, African health science was founded upon holistic principles. This science pre-dates Egyptian medical science and is between 20,000 and 100,000 years old. In fact, it is the oldest medicinal science on the planet. African health practitioners were devoted to teaching individuals to improve their physical, mental, and spiritual health through preventative lifestyles. The African physician and health professional had to first develop their own understanding of how African physiology worked on all levels before they could treat diseased individuals. This holistic wisdom has been passed down to us as "The Science of African Bio-chemistry". This is the

African health system according to "Naturopathic" principles. In this system, the patient is given an herb or food that will help the body defend itself. For example, if a patient is suffering from joint pain (arthritis), then this would perhaps indicate that there may be a calcium and/or mineral deficiency caused by a nutritional deficiency in the diet.

The African physician would advise or teach their patient what lifestyle, nutritional, emotional, or dietary changes should be made to alleviate the condition. This philosophy was consistent with the laws of nature and is based upon a belief in the body's innate God given natural ability to heal itself when given the appropriate herbs, seeds, and foods.

The human body contains millions of micro organisms which support and help to keep our immune systems healthy and have enabled us to have healthy lives. The ancient Africans believed that a healthy immune system is responsible for the health and healing of the human body. From this premise, health problems occur as the result of "something lacking" in our nutrition leaving the human body vulnerable to disease. African medicine is a nutrient based system. A diet and lifestyle deficient in vital nutrients

makes us susceptible to opportunistic infections, and cellular disorganization (cancer). This is why some people who are exposed to the cold virus do not get a cold. Or why some people are able to recuperate from a deadly disease such as cancer, and others cannot. However, many scientists and physicians reject the vitamin deficiency concept of disease until it is proven and tested through clinical trials.

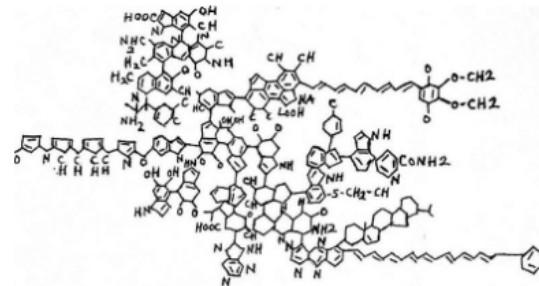
### **African Physiology and nutritional needs**

African health scientists discovered that many of the intricate biochemical processes that govern the body can be influenced by the presence or absence of certain vitamins, minerals, or nutrients. The ailments that African people suffer from today are based on our improper diet and lifestyle. The science of African bio-chemistry is based on the melanin molecule which is dominant in Africans. Western health science is based on white body chemistry, and is incompatible with the African body type.

According to Dr. Carol Barnes in his book, Melanin: The Chemical Key to Black Greatness: "Melanin is a molecule, but a very large complicated and complex living molecule. It has

a very high molecular weight of over 200, meaning that one molecule of melanin is composed of a three dimensional configuration of over 200 individual atoms. It is a living molecule, a life chemical, and it is charged like a battery. In fact, it operates like a battery or super-conductor, yet it is heat resistant and is characterized by a nice, sweet fragrance." Melanin is responsible for manufacturing and sustaining life and it keeps the Black human in constant contact with the natural energies of the Universe. (see Diagram 6).

### **Diagram 6 Break Down of the Bio-Chemistry of Melanin**



RCHOOH=Carboxylic acid

OH=Hydroxyl (alcohol)

ROR= Ether

RCOOR=Ester

RNH<sub>2</sub>=Amino

AROH=Phenolic

RCHO=Aldehyde

NH=Nitrohydrogen

HC=Hydrocarbon NH<sub>3</sub>= Ammonia

NH<sub>4</sub>= Ammonium

NH<sub>4</sub>Cl=Ammonium Chloride

NH<sub>4</sub>OH=Ammonium Hydroxide

H=Hydrogen

N=Nitrogen

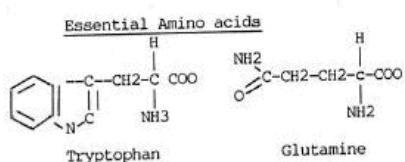
C=Carbon

H<sub>2</sub>O Water

The Anin in the word Melanin is derived from a similar word called Amine; Amine is a Nitrogen based functional group derived from Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) and is designated in chemistry as a Hydrocarbon Amine, when it is attached to a Hydrocarbon.

Hydrocarbons are chemical units that contain Carbon and Hydrogen atoms. Nitriloside is essential for African bio-chemistry metabolism. Melanin depends on it to keep itself clean. Nitriloside molecules aids in converting the electronic configuration of nitrogen energy groups in the melanin molecule. It is also important in stabilizing the essential amino acids in the body is in the nervous system, the spinal cord, the glands, the brain, the DNA, the muscles, intestines, heart and liver. Its presence can be found throughout nature and is also found in many of our foods - plants, seeds, fruits, and vegetables. It is also found in animals, in the soil, in the bark of trees, rivers, streams, and seas. In explaining the importance and significance of melanin in African physiology, Professor T. Owens Moore, in his book "The Science of Melanin", likens melanated people to plants:

"A melanated human body is synonymous



with chlorophyll in plants. The chlorophyll functions as a converter of solar energy. Similarly, melanin is a converter of physical energy. We know that such pigments are essential to maintain the vitality of the plant. Thus, no flora without pigment exists on this planet. White leaves do not exist. The pigment chlorophyll is necessary for all vegetation. Similarly, melanin is important for proper human physiology."

Yes, the same melanin that gives life to the plants that grow in the soil is a life giver to humans as well. On the molecular level the electrons in melanin molecules orbit and rearrange themselves. They undergo what is called resonance. This rearrangement of electrons causes certain energy shifts in the body. This energy is then used in metabolism and cellular organization. Melanin depends on nitriloside to keep itself clean. "When we eat synthetic foods, or cooked foods, we don't get enough B vitamins and a lot of toxins are not removed and end up in the brain," states Dr. Jewel Pookrum.

When melanin becomes toxic it adversely effects the biochemistry, and the individual with toxic melanin becomes susceptible to a host of

diseases. How does melanin become toxic? When we eat certain foods that are not compatible with our physiology, melanin is blocked from making the energy exchanges that are needed and this results in dysfunction and disease. Dr. Laila Afrika states in his book, "African Holistic Health":

"Blacks have specific nutritional and dietary needs. These nutritional needs arise because Blacks have specific bodily differences as compared to other races and cultures. For example, over 70% of Black people (worldwide) cannot digest cattle milk. In addition, the intestinal floriae (bacteria, virus, fungus and yeast) that naturally live in Black people's intestines are unique to Blacks. Subsequently, Blacks assimilate food in the intestines differently. Also, despite centuries of living in countries outside of Africa their intestinal floriae are the same as it was in their ancestor's stomachs 2,000 years ago in Africa. Melanin (black color pigment) is obviously most abundant in Blacks. This melanin aids in protecting Blacks from the ultraviolet rays of the sun. It also increases the speed of nerve and brain messages which are transmitted between the left and right hemispheres of the brain and all nerve signals transmitted throughout the

crystallizes differently from Caucasian's blood. These are some of the many reasons why Blacks have unique nutritional, medical, and dietary needs."

After African people were transported into the cities of America and Europe during slavery, their eating habits were changed drastically and suddenly. The result has been chronic and metabolic diseases of all kinds.

A brief look at the African American diet tells the story. The food shelves of Black Americans are now lined with high carbohydrate foods that have been processed, refined, synthesized, artificially flavored, and loaded with chemical preservatives. To compound this problem, most of the vitamins, trace elements, and enzymes are completely removed through the manufacturing process, mostly so as to render the food more durable. We are told by the food processors that the vitamins and minerals are put back into the food before sending it to the market. And so we see the word "enriched" on our bread, milk, and other foods. But make no mistake about it, nothing is left but raw starch which has little nutritive value. These starch synthetic chemicals are injected, which form only part of the missing

vitamins, and are not properly ingestible by human beings because they are not "in balance".

Most African Americans assume that it makes little difference what they put into their stomachs as long as they are full. And one of the leading culprits in the way of poisonous foods eaten by Black Americans is soul food

-Ham, potato salad, french fries, pork chops, chitterlings, collards, pig feet, cornbread, black-eyed peas, and hog maws. All of these foods are cooked in or laced with pork fat, lard, milk, eggs, butter, salt, spices, and lots of refined sugar. These foods are not compatible with our bio-chemical makeup, and are responsible for the many diseases that we suffer from today.

Let us pause; then, and reflect on the significance of this knowledge. Is it possible that hypertension, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, rheumatic diseases, much of our gastrointestinal disorders, sickle cell anemia and skin disorders all are related directly or indirectly to a deficiency in our diet? Let us return to the main topic - African Biochemistry, and to the realm of those questions for which we do have answers. It is no longer a speculation, but a fact supported by a mountain

of evidence that "nitriloside" (beta-cyanogenetic glucosides) rich plants and foods is a vital part of an amazing bio- chemical process in the African body type.

The compound nitriloside occurs abundantly in nature in over twelve hundred edible plants and found virtually on every continent in the world. It is mainly found in the seeds of those fruits in the "Prunus Africanus" and "Prunus Rosacea" species of plants. It can also be found in grasses, sorghum, millet, cassava, and many other foods that, generally have been removed from the foods of Western civilization.

Like sugar, nitriloside can be classified as a food component or a food factor. It is non-toxic, water-soluble, and completely normal to and compatible with human metabolism. Since it was an essential food compound in the diet of our African ancestors, I call it "African Nutritional Factor".

African physiology evolved over millions of years to be in the best possible harmony with the diet our ancestors were eating. If we were to eat now approximately what we ate then, our bodies will automatically tend to resume the harmony of their natural state. In other words,

our immune systems would perform at its highest function if we give it those food nutrients in those forms, that it craves for.

The African diet was primarily vegetarian. That is, our diet was almost exclusively from the plant kingdom. Very little animal, or dairy products were eaten. However, today, the foods that once provided African Americans with ample amounts of natural nitriloside compounds was replaced altogether by foods almost devoid of this factor. Significantly, it is during the time span that we have been in the Americas that the cancer rate has moved steadily upward to the point where, today, it is one of the number one causes of death of Africans in America.

### **The Protective Role of Nitriloside foods against Cancer**

For centuries, nitriloside rich plants were used by Africans as a food and medicinal agent without manifesting any side effects. This diet has been one of the deciding factors that protected the integrity of the biochemical processes in African people. Preventing the formation of cancer cells, appear to be closely related to the traditional African diet. Let's examine the science behind this ancient

wisdom.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the anti-cancer effect of nitriloside food Nutrients. Its molecular composition was first isolated and identified in the 1950's by Dr. Ernst T. Krebs, a biochemist in San Francisco. He advanced the theory that cancer was caused by a deficiency of the compound nitriloside. According to Dr. Krebs, cancer is the result of "over-healing" of the body. This is why smoking, a poor diet or excessive exposure to the sun, or any number of harmful chemicals can cause cancer. Anything that causes damage to the body can lead to cancer if the body's healing processes are not functioning properly. And, indeed, this has been proven to be true. According to Dr. Stewart Jones, author of "Nutrition Rudiments in Cancer": When cancer begins to form, the body reacts by attempting to seal it off and surrounding it with cells that are similar to those in the location where it occurs. A bump or lump is the initial result.

According to G. Edward Griffin's book, World without Cancer, "Anything that produces prolonged stress or damage to the body can initiate the healing process. If this goes unchecked because the body lacks the necessary

chemical ingredients to restore the equilibrium, then the result is cancer."

It is significant that prior to African people's arrival to the Americas, there was no records of them ever been known to contract cancer while maintaining their traditional diet. Millet was once Africa's staple grain. It is high in nitriloside content. In fact, missionary and medical journals have recorded many cancer-free tribes all over Africa.

As far back as 1913, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the world famous medical missionary to Africa, discovered the basic cause of cancer. Although he had not isolated the specific nitriloside compound, he was convinced from his observations that a difference in food was the key. In his preface to Alexander Berglas's book, Cancer: Cause, and Cure, he wrote:

"On my arrival in Gabon (Africa) in 1913, I was astonished to encounter no cases of cancer. I saw none among the natives two hundred miles from the coast...I cannot, of course, say positively that there was no cancer at all, but, like other frontier doctors, I can only say that, if any cases existed, they must have been quite rare. This absence of cancer seemed to be due to the difference in nutrition of the natives

compared to the Europeans..."

From all over the African continent, the one thing Africans have in common is that the degree to which they are free from cancer is in direct proportion to the amount of nitriloside found in their diet. As much as 80% of the tropical African diet consist of nitriloside and thiocyanate yielding foods. The main staples of sub-Saharan Africa are cassava, yams, sorghum, and millet grains. Let us not content ourselves only with the history of our health records. Let us reinforce our knowledge with the science of how nitriloside foods work to fight cancer, sickle cell anemia, and other chronic diseases.

### **Bio-chemical Process of Nitriloside against Cancer cells**

The nitriloside compound is a crystalline structure which contains two units of glucose (sugar), one of benzaldehyde, and one of cyanate, which are tightly bonded together. Locked together in this natural state, it is completely inert chemically and has absolutely no effect on human tissue.

There is only one substance that can unlock the nitriloside molecule and release the cyanate and benzaldehyde. - That substance is an enzyme called "beta-glucosidase", which is

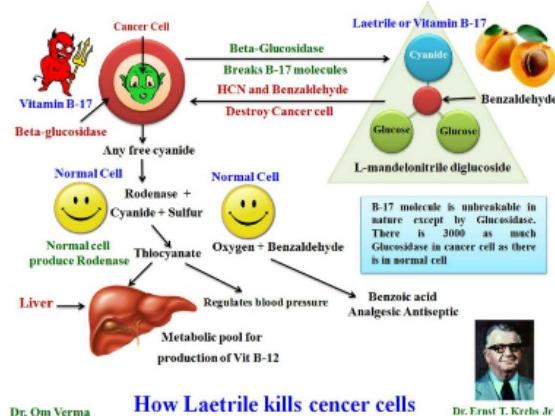
known as the "unlocking enzyme". When the nitriloside molecule comes in contact with this enzyme in the presence of water, both the cyanide and benzaldehyde are released, which are highly toxic by themselves. Now both of these substances working together are at least a hundred times more poisonous than either of them separately. This phenomenon is known in bio-chemistry as "synergism".

Perhaps the most interesting fact of all about this biochemical process is that the "unlocking enzyme" is not found anywhere in the body except at the cancer cells, where it is always present in large quantities, as much as one hundred times that of the normal cells. The result is that the nitriloside molecule is unlocked at the cancer cell site, releases its poisons to the cancer cell, and only to the cancer cell! (See Diagram 7).

Another important enzyme in this process is called "Rhodanese", which is called the "protecting enzyme". This is because it has the ability to neutralize the cyanate by converting it instantly into nourishing by-products, which are actually beneficial and essential to health. But more than that, the protecting enzyme is found in great quantities in all parts of the body except

at the cancer cell site, which prevents the cancer cells from being protected.

## Diagram 7



On the other hand, healthy cells are protected, because of the excess of this enzyme which completely neutralizes the effect of the unlocking enzyme.

There are voluminous private records and medical papers written and published by well-known nutritionists, and physicians who have used nitriloside therapy in the treatment of their own Cancer patients, with an effectiveness approaching 100%! It has been used to control

and cure breast cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer, skin cancer, and colon cancer, without any toxic side-effects.

### The controlling of Sickle Cell Anemia Through African Nutritional Factors

Another benefit of the traditional African diet is the connection between Nitriloside plants and the control of sickle cell anemia. In Africa, and other parts of the world, people of African descent have developed sickle cells in the blood apparently as a natural immunity to malaria. The development of the sickle cell trait was dependent, in part, on the nitriloside chemistry of the native African diet. Once Africans were transported to the Caribbeans and the Americas, their diet became deficient in the nutrients needed to inhibit cell sickling in the blood. The result is the painful hemolytic crisis caused by the clumping of the red cells. According to research developed by Dr. Robert Huston which appeared in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in 1974, he learned that sickle cell anemia could be controlled by cyanate tablets. However, cyanate is also produced by nitriloside plants acting within the body, and it seems logical to assume that this is the way nature intended it to be taken.

However, African Nutritional Factors, interact with the "bacterial micro-flora" in the stomach and colon to suppress or eliminate the ailments associated with westernized foods.

#### High Blood Pressure and Heart Disease

But, more than that, thiocyanate is known as a natural regulator of blood pressure, which helps to prevent hypertension (high blood pressure) in African physiology. High blood pressure is a condition in which the muscles in the walls of the arteries constrict, causing the heart to pump harder or in which arteries have lost their elasticity due to arteriosclerosis. One of its underlying causes is a deficiency of African Nutritional Factors. Dr. Afrika states in his book, African Holistic Health:

"hypertension is usually caused by a lack of proper nutrition. Improper nutrition weakens the internal organs, immune system, and lowers the organs ability to utilize nutrients which feed the body. The body begins to starve because the loss of proper nutrients creates a nutritional debt. Moreover, the nutritionally starved body tries to get more nutrients to pay the debt. Consequently, the body demands more food (nutrients in the blood by drawing on poor (below-nutrient-level) blood. In order to

increase the blood supply the body begins to increase the pressure. The increase in pressure is the body's attempt to feed itself."

The body is merely defending itself by reacting with high blood pressure caused by a poor diet lacking in essential plant nutrients.

Traditional African doctors consider heart disease (arteriosclerosis, heart attack, stroke, and hypertension) to be a combination of poor nutrition and destructive eating habits. When this occurs, there is a tendency for cholesterol to accumulate in the arterial lining. The major cause is a loss of vein and artery flexibility due to a lack of bio-chemical precursors and enzymes which prevents the artery walls from deteriorating. These chemical precursors have been found in natural foods containing nitrilosides.

#### Arthritis and Rheumatism

The fact is nitriloside food factors also serve as bio-chemical mechanisms in African physiology to prevent rheumatism and arthritis. Once they enter into the blood stream, derivative compounds are produced called, "salicylates". This natural compound helps to fend off arthritis and rheumatism. Some African health practitioners including myself attest to

the theory that many toxins bind to cell membranes and disturb cellular metabolic functions, and can cause tissue damage which contribute to many of the symptoms of rheumatism, arthritis, and muscle aches. Intestinal bacteria - "Proteus mirabilis", for example, an organism recently implicated in rheumatoid arthritis, is believed to be produced by the toxic waste in the body causing painful joint inflammations.

Whereas rheumatoid arthritis disease afflicts millions of people of African descent in the U.S., effecting one in 10, very few cases have been reported among the larger populations of tropical Africa. This has defied explanation in Western health science. According to African traditional medicine, rheumatism and arthritis is a disease reaction which creates inflammation caused by crystallized urine and toxic waste. These impurities accumulate around the joints, bone lining and connective tissues. Arthritis is waste in the bone joints while rheumatism is waste in the muscles. Both of these diseases are caused by the same thing - excessive fat and meat, synthetic foods, and a poor diet deficient in thiocyanate and nitriloside.

In this connection, Robert Houston, M.D.,

Author of Sickle Cell Anemia and the Metabolites of Vitamin B17, compared the rate of rheumatoid arthritis between African Americans and continental Africans. He found that Africans living in West Africa and throughout tropical Africa only experienced rare cases of rheumatism, arthritis, and osteoarthritis where millet and sorghum grains are staples. He also found that a "salicylic acid isomer" is nutritionally produced from the nitriloside in millet and sorghum grains which works in the body to nourish healthy tissue and joints.

As demonstrated in the foregoing research, nature has assigned to the African body-type a specific diet for keeping it vital, healthy, and free from cancer. There is much yet to be learned about our bodies, and no one can claim nitrilosides are the whole answer. It is possible that an important role also may be played by other vitamins and enzymes. However, Nitriloside rich foods and vitamins seems to be the most vital and direct acting of all these factors. It is an interlocking part of the total African bio-chemistry.

Fortunately, it is not necessary for us to understand the complete bio-chemical

mechanism of foods rich in vital vitamins in order to make it work for our families. One can benefit from a special blend of nitriloside dietary supplements to block the age old diseases of cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, sickle cell anemia, diabetes, gastrointestinal disorders, rheumatism, arthritis, as well as the occurrence of HIV and AIDS.

**"African Nutritional Factor"**

**Introducing the Dietary supplement  
millions of Africans "can't live without"**

You now know you need certain vitamins and trace elements in your diet - the question is how do you get them so they'll do any good? Your bio-chemistry doesn't make them and the Western vitamin industry has processed them right out of our food.

We feel we've created the easiest, most flavorful way for mainstream African consumers to make it possible to include nitrilosides in their daily diet, and enjoy the benefits of balancing their natural bio-chemistry. And there's no easier way to work it into your diet than taking a spoonful everyday! Though long a diet staple in other parts of the world, African American consumers have a big gap in their

daily intake of African nutritional food factors. And now, this can change today! Go to [www.NileValleyMedicine.net](http://www.NileValleyMedicine.net) to order your bottle now.

## The African Philosophy of Health and Nutrition

The human body is related to and connected with the divine powers of creation. As such, it needs to be respected. To the ancient Africans, health represented the most direct path to spiritual, mental and physical attunement. It involved the mental as well as spiritual. Those who try to reduce sickness and disease into a mere bodily activity will always be disappointed for they are denying their triune nature. Our health is intricately connected with our lifestyle and our self-respect for the human vessel and when we treat it carelessly, or callously we are degrading ourselves and injuring our bodies as well as our loved ones.

The earliest inhabitants of Africa were skilled hunters and gathers. Long before other ancient civilizations, Africans planted seeds, worshiped God, and fashioned shapely tools

from iron. The beauty they perceived, they expressed in masks, painting, pottery, woodcarvings, and gold figurines. Their art and religion permeated and reflected every aspect of life.

The African concept of reality was cyclical, that is, everything has its cycles, including human life. An important aspect of these beliefs is the unity of all things in the form of One.\* Basically, it says nothing exists without this hidden, mysterious power we all call God. Therefore, a spark of One exists in all things because it is that which gives it being. From fish to birds, water to rocks, trees to man, all were of the same reality because the essence of One was everywhere. Understanding this, Africans see themselves as a part of nature, not separate from it, nor could they separate themselves from it. Nature, therefore, could be utilized in man's behalf if you know how to work with its laws. If you abuse them, they could destroy you.

Today, more than ever, it is my belief that African Americans must embrace and utilize their own African traditions of diet and lifestyle. Across North America, Black Americans are destroying their bodies with poor quality foods, unconscious indulgence, and emotional dietary

habits. Unfortunately these dangers pervade the kitchens and dining rooms of many

\*The "One" is known by many names — Oludumare, Amon, Ausar, Ptah, Neter, Allah, God, Yahweh, etc.

Americans, Black and White. But the distinctive food of the Black community is called soul food. Ham, potato salad, french fries, pork chops, chitterlings, collards, pig feet, cornbread, black-eyed peas, and hog maws. All of these foods are cooked in or laced with pork fat, lard, milk, eggs, butter, salt, spices, and lots of sugar. Let's face it, Black folks are making a lot of food choices that are ending their lives prematurely. Without a doubt, by eating foods fried in heavy grease and pork and with excessive concentrations of sugar and salt, you may be feasting your way to an early grave.

We've definitely allowed a killer to run loose in the Black community. The killer is responsible for more deaths than drugs and Black-on-Black crime. This killer makes all age groups its victims, stalking its prey during all hours of the day and night. This killer is responsible for the high incidence of hypertension, infant mortality rate and the slow miserable death of many of our senior citizens.

This killer is the diet of African Americans.

The Washington D.C. community was shocked in the 1980's, when an ad campaign sponsored by the American Cancer Society stated: "If you are Black and you live in DC, you stand a greater chance of dying of cancer." Many thought the ads were racist in their approach, but they were frank and to the point, and they told the truth, whether we wanted to hear it or not.

Cancer of the colon is the most common form of cancer in African Americans. Colon cancer is as intricately related to diet as alcoholism is related to drinking, or lung cancer to smoking. The colon is an essential part of the digestive system. If we are dying because our food is not being properly digested, then we must reconsider the food that we put into our body.

The body is basically designed to heal itself. It has the capacity to regenerate over two billion new cells every day. The energy necessary to maintain this process is derived from the foods that we eat. If your diet is not providing you with the proper nutrients, your body cannot do its job. We will get sick and continue to get sick until we either change our diet or die. These are

the only two choices that we have. Many don't know it, but the worst possible food you can put into your body is meat. The human digestive tract is not designed to process meat. Any food which stays in your body for more than eight (8) hours is going to cause problems. It takes meat an average of 90 hours to be digested. During that time, undigested pieces of meat will remain in the colon and rot, sending toxins into the body, which slowly kills you. The soul food that we so proudly claim, is our worst enemy. This food causes bloated stomachs, varicose veins, swollen ankles, high blood pressure, heart disease and a number of other related illnesses. I am sure that everyone knows at least one Black person who have suffered or died from high blood pressure, heart disease or diabetes. The sad truth of the matter is that changing our diet can significantly reduce these illnesses!

It is interesting to note that meats have never played a leading role in the diets of the traditional African. Even today, except for the Masai of East Africa, rural Africans consume small amounts of animal protein. The diet of rural West Africa today consists mainly of cereals, green vegetable. peas, beans, and the curds and whey of cow's milk. For bulk, people eat cassava, yams, and sweet potatoes. It is also

interesting to note that today's rural African does not suffer from most chronic diseases which are on the increase in the American Black community and are an ever present plague in modern society in general.

The most direct remedy for this situation is for African Americans to return to the knowledge and wisdom of their traditional way of life, especially food selection and preparation. We should remember that our principal food was whole grains. According to the African nutritionist, Barbara Dixon, "The culture from which our ancestors came had much to offer, not only to its people then but to us now. The part of this diet that we would consider negative today is offset by its benefits. For example, nuts, particularly peanuts supply valuable fat, protein, and vitamins often missing from the African diet. Likewise, frying in vegetable oils supplied most of the little fat received from any source. The main portion of the African diet came from whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, seen today as the hallmark of a healthy diet." Millet, a small whole grain which looks like a coarsely ground cornmeal, is mentioned in the oldest written history of Africa as the chief grain in many regions of the continent.

In West Africa, we find the natives there, living healthy lives. The food in this region is millet, beans, green vegetables, wild roots, palm oil, fish, and small fowl. Palm oil is the usual cooking fat, but peanut oil, shea oil, and occasionally coconut oil were used in different regions. Africans also made some delicious stews-flavored with tomatoes, onions, and hot pepper; spicy, thick, and made sticky with okra. I remember in 1975 when I attended an African ceremony in Washington D.C., I experienced for the first time a dish called peanut butter chicken - chicken deep-fried in peanut butter oil. It was the most delicious chicken dish I ever had. We were also served a popular yam eaten in Nigeria, which was traditionally boiled and pounded into a paste called "fufu"

The most commonly eaten fruits in Africa are akee apples, baobab fruit, guava, lemon, papaya (papaw), pineapple, and watermelon. Many times, Africans prepare these fruits with coconut milk.

We must understand the ways in which our bodies require different foods—genetically and nutritionally. The two aspects are connected, for dietary patterns of living can trigger the expression of genetic potential for either health,

or disease. Like other people, African people need information that takes into account our special health problems, unique dietary needs, and biological predisposition.

Someone once asked me, "Isn't all food the same?" "Isn't food just food?" No, it is not. As the saying goes, "one man's food is another man's poison." Every culture of people have their own dietary traditions, life experiences, and health risks.

The individual should follow the food habits of his/her particular division of the human race. By doing this, a long step will be taken in prevention of sickness because the cells of the body will receive the kind of food they can use best.

We learn from plants that racial strain shows itself in physical characteristics. Take the cactus for example. We recognize cactus by certain features developed through countless generations. It has a natural immunity to heat, retains moisture, and thrives under environmental conditions its ancestors learned to combat and to use. For, say, a tomato plant or water cress, these conditions would not do at all.

In Europe, the three white racial groups are Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean. The word

Nordic means northern. The Nordics occupy the most northernly part, living in the north European coastal regions, which for several months of the year support no vegetation. Therefore, Nordics are largely fish eaters, eating about ten times as much fish as meat. For vegetation, commonly land-grown elsewhere, they depend to a great extent on seaweed washed up on shore, and moss harvested from seacoast rocks.

The person living in a Nordic "human house" who is willing and able to follow the diet of his racial strain should find a newness of health, greater freedom from sickness, less dental decay, renewed energy. Wheat bread and, wheat cereals will not be for you; your bread is rye bread. Muscle meats are not for you. Instead of eating beef, lamb and pork, you should live out of the ocean, eating fish and other seafood.

You live in an Alpine "human house" if you have brown or hazel eyes, chestnut brown or black hair, and a round head that has a tendency to breadth from ear to ear. Land grown foods such as cereals, and meat from game, flocks, and herds-are for you.

If you have dark eyes, dark skin, black hair, and a long head, your "human house" is

Mediterranean. You can eat seafood, dairy products, cereals, and fruit. Your system will especially favor corn cereals, grapes, and the juice of grapes.

Foods favorable to the African "human house" are nuts, berries, fruit, seeds, grains, and all types of fowl, and dark green vegetables, which are a valuable source of vitamins and minerals. Meat is not for you; sugar is not for you. Your proper sweetening agent is honey. Dairy products are not for you. This is the reason why many African Americans find themselves being lacto-intolerant (unable to digest milk efficiently) at such an early age.

All animals, including man, have the power to adapt themselves to surrounding conditions, but the adaptation is not accomplished in one or two generations, or even several. It must be recognized that in recent times a great change has taken place in the dietary habits of nearly all peoples. Development of technology, machinery, and transportation has made possible a tremendous increase of land under cultivation, hence an available food supply. This, in turn, has allowed a greatly expanded population, which grew more rapidly because of the advances made in the control of epidemic

disease. It has also changed the character of food from natural food to processed and denatured food. The change is especially drastic for those of Nordic and African descent.

The following is an African nutritional and lifestyle guide. It is based on what is best about our African past and all the healthful practices that are compatible with our African "human house".

### **A Guide to African Health**

Heal and cleanse yourself in all ways; physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Because of our diets, the average person carries 3 to 30 pounds of hardened, impacted feces in their colon that never comes out even with enemas and colonics. It is a source of continuous poisoning and many health problems, including colon cancer, the number two-killer in America and the most common form of cancer in Blacks. "The Colon Health Handbook", by Robert Gray, an African American, gives an outstanding simple effective program for simultaneously cleansing out your colon, organs, and body tissues. Other great programs are outlined in Jason Winter's "Cleanse" and Bernard Jensen's "Tissue Cleansing through Bowel Management". As a

temporary solution-until you are able to really clean yourself out, take a few teaspoons of psyllium husks or powder (it's tasteless) in juice or water everyday. In fact, consider making this part of your daily health maintenance (unless you eat a fiber-rich diet). Psyllium expands to 10 times its volume in your colon, making it an excellent intestinal broom, which prevents toxic buildup in the colon and ensures regular bowel movements! Normally, about one third of your stool is dead colon germs. Your stool should float — if it sinks to the bottom of the toilet, the bad germs are prevailing!

### **Sickness is a Business**

Sickness, not health, is a multi-billion dollar industry today and the powerful medical authorities are doing everything to keep it that way. Over 80% of All-Americans suffer from some form of degenerative disease! Over 240,000 die in the U.S. every 2 months from so-called incurable diseases! ("The Golden Seven Plus One" by N. Samuel West.) The profits made from them while they are on the way out is staggering. When doctors go on strike and withhold drugs, death rates drop by 25% to 60%. There are cures for the worse killers — heart disease and cancer — but these cures are

illegal in this country since they threaten the profits of the medical industry. Getting sick or degenerating as you age indicates you are breaking the laws of health.

### **Bathing the Inside of the Body**

People clean the outside of their bodies, but rarely clean the inside of their bodies — hence we get sick and diseased. The way to clean the inside of your body is through FASTING, (on fruit juice or raw juicy fruit with regular enemas and high doses of Vitamin C). Fasting causes your body to detoxify, rejuvenate, and heal itself of any disease, including cancer. Toxins from your unclean diet accumulate inside your body, causing bad breath, body odors, pain, etc. Accumulated toxins, not germs are the main cause of poor health. When the body tries to save itself by forcing out accumulated toxins, we call this condition "disease". Germs and viruses can only thrive in unclean bodies. The filth becomes their food and breeding ground. If you keep your body clean on the inside (through periodic fasting), you won't get sick! When you catch the common "cold", this means your body is house cleaning - expelling loads of toxins trapped in mucus. A good fasting program is in, "Heal Thyself" by

Queen Afua. Fasting also promotes "peak experiences", natural highs, divine attunement, profound mental clarity and heightened sense of wellbeing.

Here is a safe and easy way to cleanse the inside of the body at home: for 3- 10 days, eat nothing but raw juicy fruit and/or drink fruit juice with plenty of water (not tap water but pure water) and large doses of vitamin C. Vitamin C is a powerful, safe neutralizer of the toxins your body will release. Along with this, take an enema twice a day. The enemas are very important. If you dislike enemas, take psyllium as described earlier. Break the fast with a salad, not heavy food or a full meal! It's also good to fast one day per week to give your hardworking digestive organs a rest! It helps you stay young.

### **Foods as Disease**

The foods of disease are so delicious — like red meat, all pasteurized dairy products, carbonated drinks, coffee, salt, sugar, refined, bleached white flour, refined foods and any foods you are unknowingly allergic to. Better to substitute:

- Chicken/fish
- Unpasteurized (raw) dairy products

- Purified water
- Fruit juice or herbal teas
- Herbal seasoning
- 100% maple syrup
- Unbleached/whole grain flours
- Natural produce.

Stop eating foods that you are unknowingly allergic to. Throw away your aluminum pots and utensils; they poison your food! Increase eating raw, organic fruit, vegetables, and sprouts. Drink plenty of pure water — not tap water. Your urine should be clear, not yellow! Water is a key to optimum health and internal cleanliness. Also minimize eating starches, cooked foods, animal proteins. Cooked foods are dead, devitalized food with the life force gone. They speed up aging and deteriorate your body. Life comes from life, death from death. If you follow the above diet, it will keep you young. Honor your body and it will honor you with health and vitality.

Consider this fact: Uric acid (which is excreted as urine) and manure germs are what give red meat its delicious flavor! If you doubt this, try eating kosher-style meat before it's spiced. As the blood is drained out, so is most of

the uric acid. How about those manure germs: when the animal is alive, the osmotic process in its colon keeps the putrefactive colon bacteria from getting into the animal. When the animal is dead the osmotic process is gone and the putrefactive manure germs swarm through the walls of the colon and into the flesh, tenderizing the meat. Meat has to age. What ages or softens the flesh are the putrefactive colon germs. Experts say the bacteria in meats are identical with those of manure and more numerous in some meats than in fresh manure. Is that what you want to eat? Plus it takes about 90 hours to digest meat — during which time undigested pieces rot in your colon, slowly poisoning you. Any food remaining in the colon over 8 hours spells future health problems. A few more shocking, 'meaty' facts: that red meat in the nice supermarkets feels and looks so fresh. This illusion is created by poisons called chemical and drugs. When an animal is killed, the flesh spoils promptly and turns brownish yellowish. Rigor mortis sets in quickly and makes the carcass stiff. No problem; that off-colored meat is dyed to look red and fresh; chemicals are added to make the flesh pliable — that's why your raw steak isn't stiff; cancer-causing nitrates/nitrites (poisons) are added to

camouflage the rotten smell and rotten taste!

In addition, hormones fed to animals are causing some men to grow breasts! Further, the animals are filled with terror prior to and during their slaughter. This terror causes their adrenal glands to flood their bodies with poisonous adrenaline. And this in turn, upsets the natural adrenals in the human body leading to more disease.

By applying the following simple steps you can regain African holistic health:

1. Stay interested in your health and nutrition.
2. Cut down on food intake.
3. Remove foods high in sugar content: (candies, cakes, pies, rolls, ice cream, etc.).
4. Replace junk foods with fruits, fruit juices, and nuts.
5. Replace dairy products such as milk and eggs with their organic counterparts.
6. Replace meat with organic chicken and fish.
7. Completely remove all inorganic

foods from your diet, that is, all synthetic, highly processed man-made foods.

8. Work towards incorporating exercise and meditation in your daily life (such as yoga and Kundalini meditation).
9. Fast one day a week.
10. Drink two (2) glasses of pure water (room temperature) upon rising each morning.

Those interested in a more detailed nutritional plan grounded in African dietary principles should read, "Good Health for African Americans" by Barbara M. Dixon. It features the Sankofa Program based on the wisdom of our ancestors. Also read, "African Holistic Health" by Llaila Afrika, "The Master Cleanser" by Stanley Burroughs, "Rational Fasting" by Arnold Ehret, and "Heal Thyself Cookbook" by E. Szekely.

## **Western Medicine vs. African Medicine**

W

estern medicine deals in the area of eliminating the symptoms that have manifested in the physical body, while African Yoruba medicine deals with the elimination of the root source of the problem. All illness is the result of imbalance of the physical, mental and spiritual aspects in the body. The Yoruba healer who cures the person of the symptoms has to dissipate the negative energies. Unless he addresses the cause of the disease, the sickness will eventually come back.

The only complete healing for a ailment must include a change of "consciousness" (Ori) where the individual recognizes the root cause and does not wish, or feel compelled to violate it again. So the Western doctor, by removing the discomfort through drugs, has temporarily taken away the motivation (iwa-pele) for their

patient to look for the true healing. However, as the patient's state of consciousness asserts itself, they will again violate the same natural law and eventually have another opportunity to receive motivation in the form of a new ailment to learn what they are doing wrong. Whenever we listen to our bodies, it moves to provide us with the training and the appropriate knowledge that we need to regain our balance.

## The Integration of African Medicine into Planetary Herbology

I

have tried in this essay to accomplish the first part of a pleasant assignment, which I rashly laid upon myself about two years ago: to integrate African holistic medicine into the scheme of Planetary Herbology. It is no exaggeration to say that this would not have been possible without the pioneering work of Dr. Michael Tierra. My goal was to add to the tremendous work Dr. Tierra laid out in integrating Eastern and Western philosophies and the principles of Chinese, Japanese, Ayurveda, and North American Indian herbal medicine.

After close study of the herbal principles supplied in African medicine, I noticed the fundamental unity and similarities within and between other herbal systems, namely,

Ayurveda, North American Indian herbology, Western, and Chinese herbology. This was due partly because of the historical and cultural links of each of these systems. Yet, it is well to remember that the meeting of cultures have also triggered tremendous creative explosions in medicine and philosophy. East Indian medicine was born in a meeting of the Black Dalilia (the Black Untouchables) and Indo-Europeans. Chinese herbology adopted some of its principles with the meeting of ancient Egypt. Japanese medicine was born in a meeting with Chinese culture, and Western herbology sprang from a meeting of the ancient Greek and African Egyptian priests. These are only a few illustrations; much of what I find exciting and interesting.

Let us look at the correspondence between Western herbology and the Egyptian system. The Hypocritic humoural theory was taken from Egyptian Magical Principles (see diagram 1). The basis of this theory was the belief that the human body was made up of the four elements of which the whole material world was composed: fire, air, earth, and water. It was also believed that each element possessed certain qualities: hot, dry, wet, and cold. These elements could be mixed in more ways than one,

and the various mixtures gave rise to different temperaments and "humours". The proper balance of elements preserved the health of the body and a lack of balance led to illness, which called for the doctor's healing magic.

The Yoruba priests adopted this same system with slight modifications. In the Yorubic system, the four elements became Shango (fire), Oya (air), Yemoja (water), and Elegba (earth). So, integrated into Yoruba medicine are many concepts of ancient Egyptian medical principles.

Traditional Chinese Medicine places primary emphasis on the balance of *qi*, or vital energy. There are 12 major meridians, or pathways, for *qi*, and each is associated with a major vital organ or vital function. These meridians form an invisible network that carries *qi* to every tissue in the body. Under the Yoruba system, the major meridians are the 7 Orishas. Ogun represents the flow of vital energy, which is the divinity of clearing paths, specifically in respect to blockages, or interruption of the vital energy at various points in the body. (See Table 1.) Upon close study, it becomes evident that the Orisha modes correspond very easily to the Chinese concept of *qi*.

Also in Traditional Chinese Medicine, the

vital energy comprises two parts: Yin and Yang.

\* They are considered opposites masculine and

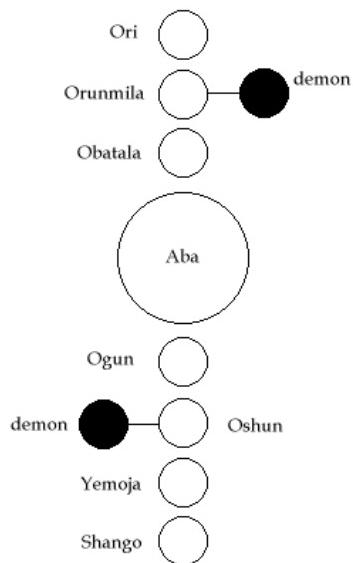
\*The Chinese borrowed the principle of "Yin" and "Yang" from the ancient Egyptian concepts of "Shu" and "Tefnut". Also note that the word "Yang" and the Yoruba word "Shango" comes from the same etymological root.

impacted upon their aura essence.

## DIAGRAM 8

### The Yoruba Conception of Alignment and Disease

Diagram 4: The Yoruba Conception of Alignment and Disease



The Oloogun (priest) may prescribe the patient various herbal combinations to be included in a spiritual bath to cleanse the person of negative influences, which have

feminine, heavenly and earthly. The theoretical equivalent of Yin and Yang in Yoruba is represented by Oshun (the divinity of feminine essence), and Shango (the divinity of virility, and masculinity). It is interesting to note that just as Yin represents the quality of cool and Yang the quality of hot, Oshun represents the power to heal with cool water, and Shango is represented by fire (heat).

Physical and spiritual balance in Yorubic medicine is best described by the concept of "Aba", or human development. Aba is a circle in the center, which is aligned with the seven Orishas, each of which is represented by smaller circles of the opposite colors of black and white. The smaller circles represents the ever changing nature of Orisha (spirit) and ajogun (demon), and each Orisha demonstrate that each contains the potential to transform into its corresponding demon (or disease) (see Diagram 8). It is the job of the African healer to bring the Orisha Internals into alignment. This coincides with the Chinese belief that the universe is forever changing through Yin and Yang.

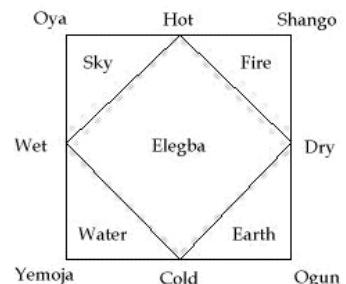
In the Yoruba system, the seven Orishas have many counterparts, or partners that brings about various qualities or spiritual forces. This reciprocal relationship, in turn, gives rise to the four elements, and other attributes which influence the physical world (see Diagram 9).

As in Western and Chinese herbology, the Yoruba system incorporates environmental and emotional states. Yoruba priests believe that the Orishas govern a law of human passions and desires, which, if improperly indulged, or violated, will prevent a person from gaining spiritual benefit from the external acts of rituals. Demons or negative spirits enters the body through the five senses, the imagination and the carnal appetites. The Chinese also recognize the "seven emotions" as causes to disease. The "seven emotions", or "evil vices" approximates the "the law of human passions and desires" in Yoruba medicine. For example, under the Yoruba system, someone suffering from guilt can bring on a multitude of evil spirits, or illnesses. The Elegba Orisha, is the primary negotiator between negative and positive forces in the body. The emotion of guilt can put Elegba into a negative disposition, which in turn, can effect the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. Physically, the negative

disposition can cause chronic digestion problems, and a weakening of the immune system.

## **DIAGRAM 9 The Yoruba Four Elements.**

**Diagram 9**



1) *Shango Orisha represents the fire element and is hot and dry in nature. It is considered to be the Protector/Warrior, and possesses the ability to transform base substance into that which is pure and valuable. It is associated with the color red. Its season is summer.*

2) *Elegba Orisha represents the earth element and is dry and cold in nature. It is the Messenger of the Orisha, Holder of Asha among the Orisha, and is associated with the colors red, black, and white*

3) *Yemoja Orisha represents the water element and it is cold and wet in nature. She is the Mother of Waters and is associated with the color blue and crystal. Its season is winter.*

4) *Oya Orisha represents the wind, or air element and is hot and wet in nature. She is responsible for the winds of*

*change, and is associated with the color reddish-brown. Its season is spring.*

The spiritual bath is given along with prayers and incantations especially designed to help ward off the negative spirits. As in Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Yoruba priests help to cure physical symptoms by treating the emotional vice that lead to the ailment in the first place.

Like other traditional medicines with a long history, Yoruba medicine focuses on the individual and what imbalances may be contributing to or causing illness or disease.

Now let's look at Ayurveda in light of Yoruba principles. I found that there were many comparisons between the two systems. As I mentioned earlier, racially and linguistically, the East Indians and Africans have a common origin, going back to the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Dravidians. Ayurveda developed in contemporary contact and mutual influence from these ancient cultures.

Note the startling resemblance between the linguistic terminology of Yoruba and Ayurveda, very often the same sounding words, meanings,

and similar spellings:

**Yoruba Ayurveda**

OsirisIswari  
IshtarIshvara  
SamadSamadhi  
OrishaDosha  
MayeMaya  
OgunGuna  
ObatalaVata  
KhephshKapha

These similarities in names can hardly be coincidental.

Ayurveda holds that three basic biological principles, or doshas, govern the body, and control the body's functions. These doshas and the functions they govern are:

-vata— movement  
-pitta — heat, metabolism  
-kapha — physical structure and fluid balance

The Indians believe that each individual has

a combination of doshas. Imbalance of these doshas is the cause of disease. A Vaidya (Ayurveda doctor) seeks to achieve health through the balancing of the three doshas. The "Olooguns" under the Yoruba system utilize a similar concept. They believe that the body is composed of seven Orishas, which exist in focal points of the body. These Orishas are in harmony when in perfect alignment, and the result is balanced health. They believe that when a person is in spiritual alignment, demons cannot produce illness.

At the very foundation, both systems draw from religious and philosophical view points, which brings a mind/body approach to medicine and life. Ultimately, the beliefs of Indians are similar to those of the Africans. Both are also rooted in the belief of supernatural forces for the minor ills of life. Oblations, charms, exorcisms, astrology, oracles, incantations, vows, divination, priests, fortunetellers, and demonic spirits are part of the historic picture of Africa and India.

It should come as no surprise, then, that in Osain and Ayurveda, symptoms and diseases that could be viewed as mental thoughts or feelings are just as important as symptoms and

disease of the physical body.

In terms of therapeutic approaches, both systems have many comparisons. Ayurveda uses the Panchakarma for purification and removal of toxins in the body. Osain utilizes the spiritual bath for this same purpose. Ayurveda and Osain see purification as a means of purging the body of possible infections and impurities, a practice, which has proven to have a rational basis. It is recorded that the ancient Hindus used ritual purification in minor cases by such simple ceremonies as being sprinkled with holy water, and in major cases by more complicated methods, culminating in the Panchakarma. This purification consisted in drinking a substance called ghee, or clarified butter.

A little more to the taste of Africans was the religious precept to use the spiritual bath; here again a hygienic and spiritual measure, highly desirable in Osain medicine, clothed in a religious form to expel the evil spirits that might have entered the body.

According to Osain herbology, medicinal herbs, spiritual baths, prayers, and meditation is the cornerstone of health. Many of the herbs used in Osain are specifically selected to effect a particular Orisha in the body, including the

energies and therapeutic properties inherent in the nature of the herb. The herbal properties are absorbed into the human dimensions and assist in the dissipation of negative influences. The ewe (herbs) are also classified and used in order to enhance one's Ashe. This is essential in Yoruba medicine in order to bring one's nature back in contact with the inherent force of all creation. This "contact" with the inherent force involves a tri-lateral process, which includes:

- 1)Nature (Ashe)
- 2)Angelic forces (Orisha).....ewe  
(herbs)
- 3)Humans (Physical forms)

By enhancing the ashe in the human form, the spiritual channels are increased in power in order to allow the internal Orishas to gain leverage over the oppressive negative forces that are upsetting balance of the body.

Now let us compare the Western system of classification with the herbal properties of the presiding Orisha correspondence:

**Obatala**:Antispasmodic, stimulants, nervine, diaphoretic.

Elegba:All herbs (herbs used for

harmonizing).

**Oshun**:Alt ernatives, blood tonics, cholagogue s, emmenagog ues, antipyretics , expectorant s, carminative s.

**Yemoja**:Pe rturient, tonics, diuretics, cholagogue s, emmenagog ues, astringents.

**Ogun**:Rub efacients, antianemics

,  
antihemorrhagics,  
nutritive tonics,  
cardiac tonics,  
diuretics.

**Ova:**Antitussives,  
demulcents,  
expectorants,  
antiphlegmatics.

**Shango:**Bladder infections,  
prostate glands,  
impotence,  
wasting diseases.

The Planetary system of herbology also recognizes environmental energies at the core of its principles. Environmental energy is also

categorized in herbs using the Osain system of herbology. Furthermore, herbs are categorized according to numbers, colors, and directions.

**Table 9 Color, Number, and Natural Environment.**

Orisha	Color	Number	Natural Environment
Obalata	White	8, 24	Mountains, Woods
Elegba	Red and Black White and Black	1, 3, 21	Woods, Crossroads, Gateways
Yemoja	Blue and Crystal	7	(salt water) Oceans, Lakes
Oshun	Yellow	5	(fresh water) Rivers, Lakes
Ogun	Green and Black	3	Railroads, Woods, Forges
Shango	Red	6, 12	Places struck by lightning, base of trees
Oya	Reddish-brown, Rust, Earth tones	9	Cemetery, places hit by Storms, Hurricane

It is believed by Africans that where a plant grows also affects its spiritual powers (energy) to heal. For instance, the Oya Orisha is considered the Guardian of the Cemetery. Any plants that are found growing in cemeteries is said to have the enhancing powers of Oya. More specifically, the Oloogun priest will search for cemetery plants growing in brownish-rusty areas which is believed that Oya Orisha hides its spiritual powers. The number nine is associated with the number of Orisha counterparts, which also accompany Oya Orisha.

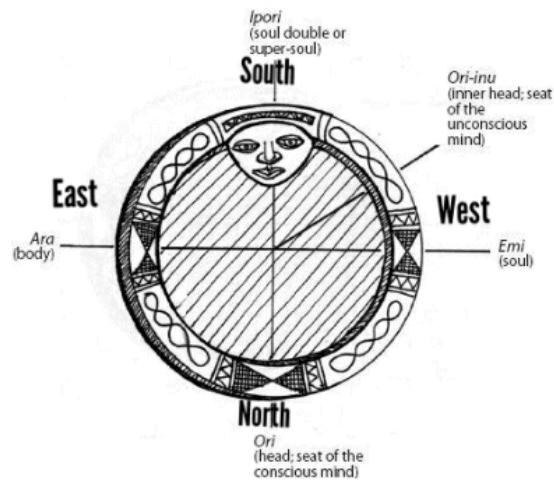
Yemoja Orisha, the Mother of Waters, is said to contain her powers in lakes and oceans (salt water). Plants in these areas are used to help protect energies of the feminine force. Examples of some of the herbs used under this classification are kelp, aloe, and squawvine, which has traditionally been used to treat female imbalances in the amniotic fluids in the womb of pregnant women.

The direction that a plant is picked in a particular area is also important under Yorubic medicine. The Orishas are said to concentrate their spiritual energies in particular directions just as the internal Orishas reside in different

parts of the body. After comparing the Yoruba system of direction with the "four directions of herbs", classified in the North American Indian medicine wheel, I discovered striking similarities (see Diagram 10).

The four directional energies that correspond perfectly with the wisdom of the Native Americans are 1) Oshun; 2) Ogun; 3) Elegba; and 4) Obatala. Again, Yoruba medical principles give us a system that harmonizes

***Diagram 10: The Four  
Yoruba Directional Energies***



with the directional energies given in Planetary Herbology. One can perceive a universal wisdom that is common in every culture and system of herbal medicine. If universal energy is One, then the foundation on which the four energies rest is Universal Energy. In other words, if the universal center is the source of all great herbal inspirations, then these four directional energies are the vehicles through which the inspiration becomes manifest. There is no other explanation for the similarities between herbal systems around the world. Every ancient culture taught the "sacred four". They indicated that we must pass through

all four aspects, or directions, if we are to be complete and balanced human beings.

In earlier times, working these universal energies into herbal principles was something that was done by the great medicine men. Today, we are left to work these things out on our own. This can be an illuminating process.

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